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ABSTRACT

The Georgia Centers for Community Education hosted the multi-state rural and small school conference because of the many educational hardships encountered in many rural and small southern schools. Speakers representing the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State University, Valdosta State College, the University of Missouri, the University of Georgia, Georgia Southern College, the Colorado Department of Education, the Mott Foundation, Inc., and the Southern Growth Policies Board spoke on a variety of topics. Papers were entitled "Rural Education: A New Awareness," "Successful Small School," "The Rural Community: From Catalogs to Computers," "Computers in Rural and Small Schools," "Volunteer Programs in Rural Schools," "The Perspective of the Future of Rural Education," "Colorado Experiment: Four-Day Schedule," "Role of Foundations," and "Role of the Federal Government." (SB)

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Rural Education: A New Awareness

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Conference Proceedings
November 15-16, 1982
Tifton, Georgia

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Foreword

On November 15-16, 1982, the Georgia Centers for Community Education co-hosted the multi-state rural and small school conference at the Rural Development Center in Tifton, Georgia. The theme of the conference was "Rural Education: A New Awareness." The conference was sponsored by the Centers for Community Education at Columbus College, Florida State University, Georgia Southern College, Southern Mississippi University, Tennessee State University, the University of Alabama (Birmingham), the University of Georgia, and the Georgia School-Based Development Enterprises. The directors of these community education centers saw a need for such a conference because of the many educational hardships encountered in many rural and small southern schools.

This publication includes some of the most important presentations made at this conference. The efforts made by the presentors represented in these proceedings are appreciated. The information within will be helpful to those who are interested and concerned about rural and small school education.

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RURAL EDUCATION: A NEW AWARENESS

Dr. Jonathan Sher
North Carolina State University

Introduction

I can say something that perhaps not many of you can. It's a pleasure to be back in Tifton--this is not my first time here. The reason for my coming here the last time was to visit the Center and to learn about the Center's program. I enjoyed that, though I must confess that this occasion encourages me even more. I think that the theme of the conference, "Rural Education: A New Awareness," is an important one, and I think that the conference itself is a sign of the new awareness.

Particularly in the South, very few conferences, seminars, and symposia have been held on the issue of rural education. The new awareness that has begun to grow around the country is only now coming to the South. I'm happy to say that I'm a part of that, being from North Carolina, and I'm delighted to see all of you here today--I think it's very encouraging.

I discussed this speech, and the theme of it, with my 13-year-old son. He told me that he learned in school certain tricks to giving speeches like this, and he gave me a little coaching on how to make a speech. I appreciated that. He said he'd learned that it's best to open a speech with an attention-getter and, when we talked about the point of the speech, he gave me a couple of suggestions. He said that he thought I ought to come out with my eyes closed, wandering and stumbling around and bumping into things, then open my eyes as if I had a new awareness of rural education--sort of an educational version of "Amazing Grace." He also said that if I didn't like that idea, maybe I ought to come out here and cough and cough and cough, and then say I was just sick about the way rural schools had been treated in the past. He had several other suggestions of the kind,

some of which should not be mentioned in polite company. However, I thanked him and told him that I'd rather open with a story--a true story--that illustrates the need for a new awareness. Interestingly, it's not a story about rural education, but it does point out the need for a new awareness in order to break some of our stereotypes both about people and about institutions.

Several years ago, a number of dignitaries held a banquet during an international conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At the dinner table was a Chinese man. The person next to him had never been around a Chinese person before--didn't really know much about him, didn't have much awareness of what this person might be like. And so he reacted out of a set of stereotypes, talking like this to the man: "Excuse me, passee forkee?" and "Wantee water?" and saying things like that all through the meal. The Chinese man would just look at him and calmly react as best he could. When the dinner was over and it was time to make speeches, it turned out that the Chinese man was one of the speakers. He got up and, in beautiful English, made an eloquent speech that was very impressive; he brought the house down. When he came back to the table, he turned to the man with whom he had been sitting during the meal and said, "You likee speechee?"

Like that man viewed the Chinese visitor, policymakers, I think particularly at the state and federal level, have viewed rural education as a kind of foreign thing, as something unfamiliar--as, if you will, a sort of distant cousin, the poor country cousin rather than as an immediate member of the family. Again, like the embarrassed dinner guest, educators have often taken a patronizing stance toward rural schools, rural teachers, and rural students, basing this stance on a set of negative stereotypes and misimpressions about what rural areas and rural folks are like.

Developing a New Awareness

But, like the Chinese visitor, when given a chance to shine, when given an opportunity to do the best, rural schools can perform as well as or better than schools anywhere in the country. I think that they can teach the American educational system as much as they have had to learn from it in recent years. So there is a need for a new awareness; there's a need for an awareness of what rural schools have as well as what they lack, of where rural schools have succeeded as well as where they've failed, and of their potential for excellence as much as their potential for mediocrity. In talking about a new awareness, we have to ask the questions: "Precisely what should we be aware of?" "What should we make others aware of?"

I think that in the South more than in other regions, the questions are intertwined. In parts of the Midwest and in parts of New England, for example, rural people have built good schools, excellent rural schools, and they know they have. They know they have quality education for their kids and for their communities, and they see their task as making other people aware of the virtues of small schools and of rural schools. But I think that the task in the South isn't just one of convincing other people. It isn't just one of convincing state department personnel. It isn't just convincing legislators, or federal officials, or your professional colleagues of the virtues and potentials of rural schools. I think, rather, the task in the South is to convince ourselves of these same virtues.

As I talk to people in my work and in my travels, I see a spirit of modesty, perhaps, and perhaps something more than that--a kind of demoralization, a kind of apathy born of the feeling that there's not much to crow about and there's not much that's going to change in order to make rural education in the South something to crow about. I think that some of this sort of demoralization, some of this apathy that exists, is based on an accurate assessment of the reality of the situation. What I mean to say is that

schools in the rural South are often not excellent, are often not reaching their full potential, are often not serving the children that attend them as well as they should be. This attitude reminds me of a statement that somebody once used to describe another person: He's a modest man with a lot to be modest about. I think that this same kind of modesty can apply often to rural schools.

Perhaps more importantly, I think much of the apathy is based on a failure of the spirit and a failure of the imagination, on a failure to recognize the potential for quality and a failure to see how quality might be achieved. Thus, we should be aware and we should strive to make others aware of the existence of these failures of spirit as well as the failures of practice. But most importantly, we first need to become aware ourselves of how the spirit and the practice of rural education can be revived, rejuvenated, and restored to their proper place of excellence.

The First Myth: Anachronism

I think the starting place in developing a new awareness has to be with trying to break down some of the old myths and to straighten out some of the perpetual confusion about rural education. Perhaps the most fundamental of the myths is that rural schools don't exist anymore, that rural teaching and learning is sort of an anachronism. We look at rural education with nostalgia, sort of warmly remembered but long gone in the modern world. That is a dangerous sort of myth to hold onto because if you believe that rural schools don't exist or aren't important, then what would be the motivation for working hard to make the schools as good as they can be?

I'd like to tell you that rural schools have not gone away. I'm sure many of you are aware of this fact in your own areas. I think that a lot of policies in recent decades have been based on the notion that, sooner or later, in one way or another, rural schools would all be eliminated. In fact,

a real good try was made in the South, as well as in other parts of the country, to eliminate them; consolidation was a major feature in the South, for all kinds of reasons. But rural schools have not disappeared and will not disappear. It is perhaps worth remembering that two-thirds of all school districts in the United States are rural districts; two of three public school districts are rural school districts. Half of all the public schools in the United States are rural schools. Depending on the definition you use, between one-quarter and one-third of all the students and teachers in public schools in the United States are in rural schools.

Two-thirds of the districts, half of the schools, and a third of the teachers and students--these are significant numbers. Yet rural schools are rarely treated as if they represented this kind of population, are rarely treated as if they were responsible for the education of more than 14 million children right now.

The Second Myth: Uniformity

The second of the myths or confusions is that there is a single rural school problem. It's like what President Reagan once said about redwoods: if you've seen one, you've seen them all. That's not true. It's not true of redwoods, and it's especially not true of rural schools. There's an important diversity among rural schools that is perhaps greater than the differences among urban schools. Schools in Atlanta, Miami, and Chicago have some basic similarities. The similarities are not the same as similarities between schools in rural Alaska and a rich Iowa farming community, nor between some of the Appalachian schools and some of the New England schools, nor between some of the deep South schools. The diversity of rural education, of rural communities, and of rural people is striking. Trying to pretend that there's going to be a single answer to the rural school problem is a serious mistake, one that we've been burdened with for too many years already.

The Third Myth: Bigger is Better

The third myth is one that will sound familiar to you, I'm sure: the notion that bigger schools are better schools. Much of the consolidation movement in the South, and most of the consolidation which has occurred all around the country, has been based on this kind of logic. The consolidation movement is perhaps the single most successfully implemented educational reform of the past 50 years. We talk about lots of reforms--we talk about doing this and doing that, changing this and changing that, but, by golly, we did consolidation. In the past 50 years, we went from more than 100,000 school districts to 16,000; we went from 100,000 one-teacher schools to just over 1,000 now. We cut in half the number of secondary schools in this country while enrollment tripled.

We've done consolidation, and we did it because we thought it would lead to more efficient schools, more economical schools. We thought consolidating would provide a better quality of education. But we just bought into the idea that in education, bigger is better. Well, I'm here to tell those of you who haven't had the experience that, in fact, most of the claims made on consolidation's behalf, most of the arguments made on behalf of the notion that bigger is better, don't hold water.

My colleagues and I have been looking at this question for the past ten years and have written a number of articles--some of which you may be familiar with--that show that the claims for consolidation have not been realized and that, in fact, what we too often did by consolidating was to transform mediocre small schools in communities into mediocre large schools far from home. I'm not sure that's something to be enormously proud of. I'm sure that we can do better than that, but we can only do better than that when we begin to challenge that myth that bigger is better and begin to recognize some of the virtues of smallness.

The Fourth Myth: Standardization

The fourth issue I'd like to raise, the fourth myth or confusion, has to do with standardization. Everybody's in favor of high standards in education. I want high standards. High standards are, in fact, a good thing. It's an interesting linguistic sort of trick that we've played on ourselves, though, because we've said we want high standards and so we've translated the word "standards" to mean "standardization." Somehow, by making everything as similar as possible, by standardizing the curriculum, by standardizing the way schools look, by standardizing the training, by standardizing the way we deal with children, we believe that we're going to achieve high standards.

This reinterpretation is a fundamental confusion that has led us down a number of garden paths. For example, it leads to what I think is a grave mistake in education, and that is the pretense that kids are the same, that everybody learns the same way, that everybody learns the same things at the same time, and that, if we standardize, we will, in fact, find the road to quality. This is what I call a sort of McDonaldization of rural education--it's the notion that we're going to make schools into an educational version of the fast-food franchises. We're going to have a limited number of selections: we're going to have a food system which is dependable and convenient.

But dependability and convenience, even for efficiency in the economic sense, are not what schools are in business for. That's not why we have schools. The notion is that, by standardizing, by making schools into the educational equivalent of a McDonald's, we do two things. The first is we think we're guaranteeing that there won't be any terrible things going on. If we go into a strange town and we have a choice between a restaurant named "Eats" and a McDonald's, we're probably going to choose the McDonald's

because we're pretty sure that we're not going to get food poisoning by going in there.

The second thing is that standardization guarantees a certain minimum quality. By choosing the McDonald's, we're pretty sure that we won't be harmed directly and immediately by eating the food. But the problem is that the price we pay for that guarantee, the price we pay for the convenience and the efficiency, is that we also guarantee ourselves that we'll never get a great meal there. We'll never have wonderful food. We'll never have much of a selection. We'll never have something that speaks to the individual needs and wants of the clientele. By making sure that we've eliminated the worst cases, we've also eliminated the best cases. I think that's what we need to see in terms of standardization: it doesn't lead to high standards. What it really leads to is mediocrity. What it really leads to is a minimum common denominator rather than a realization of the maximum potential of rural schools.

The Fifth Myth: Promises of Professionalizing

My stance on the fifth issue is one that isn't going to make me very popular. This myth has to do with professionalization. There's been a great deal of work for several decades now by my colleagues to professionalize education, to put more and more control of the educational enterprise in the hands of properly prepared, state-certified professionals. I think it's a mistake. Particularly in the case of rural schools, we've cut out more and more of the community and the family, and we've cut out the positive qualities of local involvement and control. We have put more and more of the decision-making for education into the hands of trained professionals. This power-shift has been a loss to rural kids and a loss to rural communities, and has brought us very few gains. I think that the idea itself, that we need to replace lay people with professionals, ought to be replaced, and it should be

replaced by the notion of a partnership--a real partnership--between professionals and parents, between the profession and the community.

The point I want to make is that when educational researchers have looked at what matters in education, the thing that comes up over and over and over again is the primacy of the family, the primacy of the home unit. Yet, we're tending more and more to disregard that home unit, to disregard the primacy of the family in the way we operate schools. Nathan, an author, has talked about two of the most important things that any human being learns: how to walk and to talk. The interesting thing is that we don't learn to do either of these in school. They're very complex physiological and psychological processes. The kind of learning that goes into learning how to talk and learning how to walk is very sophisticated. Yet, these learning tasks happen in the home, under the guidance of people who care and who are supportive. I think that the lesson for education in that is primary--to not be arrogant about the notion that only educators and only schools teach, and that the only important things are those which are officially sanctioned by the curriculum. Moreover, when kids learn to walk and talk, the process is individualized. Not all kids learn to walk the same way, at the same time, with the same kind of guidance. Not all kids learn to talk the same way, from the same lessons, from the same stimulation. They learn it differently. They learn it in individual ways. Again, I think that we need to remember individualization in creating good rural schools.

The Sixth Myth: Urban Imitations

The sixth myth has to do with the notion that the urban curriculum, a standardized curriculum, is the answer. We have thought that what rural schools lack is a broad enough curriculum, that they can't offer kids the opportunities that would be available in a standard suburban or metropolitan school. The mistake in this attitude is in trying to imitate a model of

education that is inappropriate in most rural areas. Having lots of specialists teaching individual subjects to large groups of kids all at one time in one place is, first of all, perhaps not the best method of education in terms of how teaching and learning actually occur. But more importantly, it's very expensive and very hard to pull off in terms of having enough trained personnel. These have been very real problems in the rural South--finding enough money and finding enough qualified specialist teachers to run an imitation of the standard suburban model.

My point is that this model of education is not the only one worth understanding; it's not the only model of teaching and learning that's worth taking seriously. In fact, it may make more sense to develop uniquely rural models of education which are first-rate than to continually develop second-rate imitations of what metropolitan schools do. For example, 50 years ago when some of this mythology was being built, one of the advantages that we have now that we didn't have is the microcomputer, as well as other kinds of technology. If you have a school and there are only three students who want to take physics, it's no longer accurate to say, "We can't offer those kids physics because we don't have enough enrollment to justify hiring specialist teachers." This is simply not true anymore. One advantage of the new technology is we can now offer an amazing array of learning resources to children wherever they are. We can now turn around the notion that we must take children to the resources for learning to occur. We too rarely take advantage of the fact that we're now living in an age allowing us to bring an amazing array of resources to children wherever they are instead of forcing them to go long distances to find the resources they need.

Particularly a problem in the South is that we have areas that are very sparsely populated, with great distances between families and between towns. Schools in these areas have remained small by necessity, and they've had to

adopt a uniquely rural style of education. I find it ironic that much of the rural education that was created out of necessity is, in fact, the same kind of education that we see in the most progressive suburban schools. Let me give you some examples. What I see occurring naturally, out of necessity, in very small and isolated rural schools are practices like kids teaching other kids, mildly handicapped kids being mainstreamed, the community being used as a learning resource, and instruction being individualized. I'm struck by the irony because when I go to progressive schools in the suburbs and see these same practices, everybody's all excited about them. They say these kinds of educational practices are great. And yet, when they occur in rural schools, we try to stamp them out. We try to get rid of the very same practices in rural schools that we applaud in suburban schools.

In this regard, I think the challenge for the South is to do it by design. We don't have the luxury of necessity to create a rural style of learning because we've already got relatively large, consolidated schools and relatively centralized systems of administration and government. The challenge now is to insist on creating a uniquely rural curriculum, a uniquely rural style of education, rather than pretending it's going to happen by accident or pretending that imitating the urban areas is sufficient for rural children.

The Final Myth: Available Funding

The last myth I'd like to mention concerns money. Rural school people often talk about the need for more resources; they often talk about the situation as if money were the solution to the rural school problem. My opinion is that money is not the answer. I have to qualify that by saying that it is absolutely correct that rural schools don't have enough money. It is absolutely correct that rural schools don't get their fair share of the available money. It is absolutely correct that we need to reform in dramatic

ways how schools are financed and how the resources we have are distributed. We can't go on in a system where rural schools continually get the short end of the stick.

The situation is different in other countries. As Paul mentioned, I've done some work overseas, in 18 countries. The thing that has interested me in looking at rural education in every other non-communist, industrialized nation--that is to say, the so-called "developed" nations of Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand--is that America is the only developed country that doesn't pay its rural teachers at least as much as teachers in urban areas. Every other developed country pays their rural teachers at least as much as comparably qualified teachers in urban settings. Moreover, in many of these countries, the issue isn't about the quality--the issue is about how much extra to give.

I just got a document dealing with the teacher reimbursement issue in Australia, and the questions the Australians are dealing with are: "Do we have a 20 percent supplement or 30 percent in addition to equality?" "Do we give them two free trips back to the city or just one?" "Do we give them utilities in addition to free housing?" These are the kinds of issues in rural education that are being debated in other countries. Yet in this country, on the average, we pay comparably qualified rural teachers 40 percent less than their urban colleagues. That's not right. So there <u>are</u> real financial problems. However, I'll still assert that even in the face of these problems, more money is not the answer. The real issue is <u>how we spend</u> that money rather than just how much of it we have. I would make the argument that, by trying to imitate an urban curriculum, by trying to have miniature replicas of suburban schools, by trying to duplicate the highly specialized teacher/classroom situation, we have locked ourselves into a very expensive system in rural schools that's inappropriate and inefficient.

We spend a lot of money on what I call the "edifice complex"--a lot of money that goes into rural schools doesn't, in fact, go into improving the teaching and learning. Instead, it goes into fancy buildings and fancy equipment--things that look good, things that politicians can stand in front of and cut a ribbon. It's hard to cut a ribbon in front of quality teaching; it's not hard to cut a ribbon in front of a fancy new facility. Here's the secret nobody wants to acknowledge: there's already a lot of money being spent in rural schools. But my argument is that it is being spent badly in most cases.

One of the issues that we need to look at is how we can really go about improving the teaching and learning process without more money because, at least in the short term, we're faced with the prospect of receiving no additional money, and maybe even receiving less than we've had so far. One response to that can be despair. Or we can use that negative situation as an opportunity. We can see that unhappy reality of diminishing resources for education as a challenge to rethink what we do in schools, to examine how we spend our money on education.

Theodore Carrone, head of a center for teaching and learning in North Dakota, has had a lot of experience with rural projects and rural development. He says that what he's learned over the years can be summed up very simply: that rural projects and rural programs work when they're given too little money and too much time, and that when governments become interested in rural schools, their natural reflex is to give too much money and too little time--just the opposite of what, in fact, works. I think that we can dramatically improve our rural schools without major infusions of new money, and we would only be pursuing a first-rate rural education rather than continuing to fund a second-rate imitation of metropolitan education. I think we have to be

aware that, particularly in the South, the problem--the challenge--is to overcome the past solutions.

Developing a New Wariness

There's been awareness of rural schools before; we're talking about a new awareness of rural education. But we need to have a little bit of caution. Let's remember that this would not be the first time that people and governments have become aware of rural schools in an active way. Last time there was an awareness of rural education, it led to massive consolidation, to massive urbanization, centralization, standardization, and professionalization of rural education. Awareness by itself isn't the answer. I think that much of the problem here is overcoming the legacy of the solutions to the rural problems of the past.

So, coupled with our new awareness of rural schools, I think that we need a new wariness. I think that we need to be wary of the kind of quick-fixes that reformers promise. I think we need to be wary of the kind of quick-fixes that government agencies talk about in quick programs to solve long-standing problems.

George Will once read about the three great myths of American society. He said that these myths were: 1) "The check is in the mail"; 2) "I'll respect you just as much in the morning"; and 3) "I'm from the federal government and I'm here to help you." I think that we need to be wary of newfound friends. We need to be wary of people who over-promise solutions to very difficult and complex problems. But, most of all, we need to be wary of giving in too quickly, of selling out too cheaply.

Equal Rights in Education

The Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the United States has an interesting premise in it--one that I very much believe in--and that's the notion that everyone must be protected in order for anyone to be protected,

that each individual's rights depends upon maintaining every other individual's rights, that when you discriminate or when you deprive anyone of his or her rights, it eventually creates a rationale for depriving ourselves and those around us of our rights and privileges. I think that the problem in education is related to this fundamental principle of American democracy. I think that America--not just the South, but America as a whole--has said that mediocre education was good enough. Historically, I think we've said that to black children--we've said mediocre education is good enough for you. We've said to Hispanic children, mediocre education is good enough for you. We've said to migrant children, mediocre education at best is good enough. We've said to girls for long enough that mediocre education is good enough.

The point I'm making is that we, as a country, have said to rural schools, to farm kids, that mediocre education is good enough for you. I think this attitude is a fundamental problem; the mentality that second-rate is good enough is a fundamental constraint on school improvement in the South. My own opinion is that second-rate, mediocre education is not good enough and that we need to hold out for genuine quality and genuine excellence in education in the South. There's a reason for being optimistic about that--there are good things going on. We know of things that work that can be applied in more and more of our rural schools throughout the South.

Ways to Improve Rural Education

1. Community Involvement

I'd like to cite some examples. I think we know of a wonderful education program right here in the state of Georgia, but it's one that's rarely seen as being wonderful. I'm referring to the work of Foxfire up in Rabun County. Foxfire is seen as a publishing venture by a lot of people, as sort of an interesting way to preserve the culture in a series of books and magazines. But the important thing about Foxfire is its value as an educational

project, as a sort of uniquely rural style of education. What they've done is to say that the way to learn writing skills or photography or social science techniques is not for students to sit in a classroom and be told about them, but for the students to take advantage of the community around them; to take the opportunity to learn local history; to learn their own place in the world before learning about history as an abstract subject; to learn to write by writing something that matters because it's not just writing an assignment to be handed in to a teacher, but it's having something published that will have a national audience. It's doing work that counts. It's using the community. It's using experiential education--that's the fancy way of saying "learning by doing."

Some people too often forget that this is a very important kind of thing we can do with schools right now, with no extra cost. We can make a dramatic improvement in the way rural schools operate right now--no new money--by taking seriously what Foxfire can teach us about education. We can take seriously the notion of experiential education and community involvement, learning by doing, and doing work that matters in the real world.

2. Youth Participation

The whole area of youth participation is one that I think we can take more seriously than we have. What we see in rural communities is an interesting juxtaposition of things. On the one hand, these communities have a bunch of problems. I don't know of any rural community I've ever been in that doesn't have problems, that doesn't have needs that aren't being addressed. And on the other hand, they have a group of young people who have energy and enthusiasm, who have talent and ability. And we keep these two worlds separate; we keep them separate to the detriment of both. I think that what we need to do right now in rural education--for no new

money--is to join those worlds, to take seriously the idea of youth participation in the community and community participation in the schools.

3. School Councils

I think one thing we can do now that doesn't cost more money, but would result in better schools, is to implement school councils. America was founded on the notion of democracy, the notion that people ought to have a say in the institutions that affect their lives and the lives of their children. Yet, too often around the South, because of the county system of education, parents don't have an effective say in what happens to their kids. The system is too remote, too bureaucratized for parents to feel that they make a difference or that their opinion counts.

There are problems with school site councils, and I think we'll hear from Haze Mizell at the end of the day tomorrow about some of the potentials and problems, but the idea is right; that is, we need to decentralize authority as much as possible to get more people involved in the decision-making process, to re-create the natural bond that exists between a rural community and its schools.

4. Apprenticeships

I think we can do something else right now for no money, something that, in fact, will even save money while resulting in better education. It's something that Dale Hobbs, one of our speakers, will address in more detail. What we can do is to revive the practice of apprenticeships and revive the practice of contract vocational education. Something strikes me as bizarre when I go into rural schools and see some of the vocational education programs there; for example, a vocational program in auto mechanics which has to turn out 20 students a year because, if there aren't 20 students in the class, how are you going to justify that capital expenditure? How are we going to justify having the auto mechanics teacher?

We've locked ourselves into a system that we know is very costly and very inefficient. There are darned few rural communities that need 20 new auto mechanics a year. It can be demonstrated that the young person has learned those skills; now, that just makes good sense. But again, it's just an example pointing to the kind of thing we can be doing right now for less money that will expand opportunities for rural kids.

5. University Relationships

Another thing we can do--and I'm becoming more and more aware of it, having just come to a university for the first time this August--is that there needs to be closer connections between college schools of education and rural school districts. I guess I can talk about my own institution; that's safest. We're North Carolina State University; we're a land grant university. Land grant universities are different from other public universities. They're different from private universities. Land grant universities were set up for a very particular reason: to improve educational opportunities for rural people and to improve the quality of life in rural communities. Yet my own institution has strayed far, far away from that notion.

We have a school of education with more than 1,000 students and nearly 90 faculty members, none of whom works in rural areas, with the exception of the agriculture education teacher. There are no rural courses offered. There is no special training for rural teachers or rural administrators or rural anyone else. When they place student teachers, they do what's convenient: they place them in Wade County, which is the county where the school's located, the county which also holds Raleigh. It's one of the major urban areas in the state of North Carolina. They do it because it's easier to supervise the students when they're there. They don't have to travel so far.

5. Available Technology

The kind of improvement we could make right now for no extra money would be to take seriously the partnership that's supposed to exist between schools of education at colleges and rural school districts by better placing student teachers; by doing substitutions and exchanges between schools and colleges of education; by helping them to develop uniquely rural styles of curriculum; by taking seriously the rural agenda as part of the university's agenda. Dramatic improvements could be made right now.

The last aspect of improvement I want to talk about has to do with technology. I think that technology is an interesting example because it points out several of the dilemmas of rural education. It's the new ground for the battle between potential equality and the potential of trivialization--that's the battle of rural education. We keep having opportunities, and the choice we have to make is whether we're going to go for quality or whether we're going to trivialize the potential that exists. We can use technology right now to do more efficiently all the things we shouldn't be doing at all. And that, in fact, is much of what computer-assisted instruction is about--doing things that didn't make sense when we did them with paper and pencil.

We have made more efficient the worst part of education, and putting it into a new package doesn't make it any better. It doesn't make it any more educational because it's fancier or because it beeps. On the other hand, technology carries with it the potential to take small schools seriously. That's what I said earlier. We are at a fundamental juncture. We are at a fundamentally different point than we were 50 years ago because we can say with absolute conviction that a child sitting in the smallest rural school in this country can now have access to the best instructional materials. The child can learn any subject, can have direct access to the great libraries of

our country, the great data bases that exist. There is no reason anymore for getting rid of small schools on the grounds that we need to broaden the curriculum. That's just not true. Technology affords us the opportunity through microcomputers to make the world available to anybody anywhere.

Other kinds of technology also have potential. I'd like to cite an example that does not deal with computers. (Craig Calhoun will be talking later in the day about computers and I don't want to usurp too much of his argument.) In Hyde County, North Carolina, the people did something interesting a year ago that illustrates a number of points about what we can do now in rural education that is going to make a difference. Hyde County is a coastal county, very rural, very poor. And yet they've done something absolutely fascinating. The citizens looked around the community and said, "We have a problem of communications here as well as an education problem. We're sitting in a county that has no newspapers. There are no newspapers published in Hyde County. There's no radio station. There's no television station. There's no way of communicating effectively with the local community."

So what they decided to do last year was to set up, as part of the high school, a radio station. Now they did it in an interesting way. This is a poor county, but what they did was collect the money from the community itself to build the antenna and to build the tower. People bought deeds to the radio antenna and to the tower. Some people bought an inch, some people bought a foot, but it was financed totally by the community. They got major community involvement. They even raised enough money to buy radios for a lot of poor elderly folks in the county who didn't have a radio and who otherwise wouldn't benefit from this service.

Now the kids run this radio station from eight in the morning till four every day. They have community volunteers coming in. They've learned to

use language. They've had to learn a lot about communications. They've gained enormously in self-confidence. The high school dropout rate has been cut dramatically. Education is going on because they decided to do something that made sense in a rural context. They decided to invest in the community. They decided to forge the partnership between the school and the community and both partners have benefitted as a result.

This project didn't take more money. It didn't take a fancy federal grant or a revised financial aid formula to make it happen. It took the will and the commitment and the imagination of the people living there.

What we clearly need is a new awareness. That's the starting point. We need the new awareness, but awareness is not enough. Good intentions are not enough. Bright ideas are not enough. We've got to stop just being aware of rural education--we have to move from awareness to appropriate and effective action.

I'm going to emphasize the words "appropriate" and "effecti.." because, too often in education--in rural education and American education as a whole--we've come up with solutions that don't speak to the problem. That's what I call the Queen-for-a-Day Syndrome in American education. Do you remember the Queen for a Day t.v. show? When the people would come on, they would discuss serious problems: "My husband just died and my child's sick in the hospital and our roof fell in and our plumbing is frozen." It was one incredible, sad story after another, one series of problems after another. Then somebody won; somebody was named "Queen for a Day." And what did the winner get? She got something from the Speigel catalog and a two-week vacation to Acapulco. I mean, the answer had nothing to do with the problem.

I think that too often we play the same game of Queen-for-a-Day in education. We have serious problems and trivial responses to those problems.

It's not enough just to be aware. It's not even enough to take action just for the sake of taking action. We need to take appropriate and effective action to improve rural education.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that my argument isn't an abstract sort of argument. It isn't an academic discussion that's sort of interesting about pedagogy and the values of this pedagogy versus that pedagogy in rural schools. And it's not an argument about economic efficiency. It would be a crying shame for school issues to be resolved in sort of a dueling accountants' battle--you know, who has the better accountants, who has the better economists, who can make it look more efficient, make the numbers come out right? That's not what's at stake. It's not even about more power, necessarily, or more money for teachers.

From Awareness to Action

What we're really talking about is having a new awareness of rural education. And in moving from that awareness to effective and appropriate action, we're talking about the lives of children. We're talking about the lives of millions of children. And we're talking about the future of the South because the future of the South hinges upon human resource development more than anything. We can build lots of roads; we can build lots of industial parks; we can bring in factory after factory. But whether the South is going to make it, and whether the South is going to make it in a quality-of-life sense, is going to depend upon human resource development.

And that's the job of education. That's the job of schools for children and that's the job of adult education as well. What we're talking about are the lives of children and the future of the South. Those are pretty important agendas. Those are pretty important things to worry about. That's why a new awareness translated into effective, appropriate action is so important. The issue is whether we're going to rise to the occasion. You know

the Yankees' stereotype of the South, but the expression "The South will rise again" strikes me as fitting here. But the question is whether the South is going to rise again to the occasion, to the opportunity that exists to improve rural schools, to improve rural communities, to improve the lives of rural people. Only action will make the best potential of the rural South and of rural schools a reality.

Conclusion

I wish you well at this conference. There are some wonderful speakers here. There are some wonderful people here to get to know and to learn from and to teach, too.

I leave you with just two questions. There needs to be the new awareness. There needs to be the effective and appropriate action. If not now, when? If not us, whom?

Thank you. I hope you've liked my speech.

SUCCESSFUL SMALL SCHOOL

Jim Grant
Temple School, Temple, N. H.

Speaker's Introduction

Jim's a principal at a rural school in the mountains of southern New Hampshire; he has 63 students. He is head of the Volunteer Fire Department. He's head of the Volunteer Ambulance Service, and he's head of the Welfare Department through the Salvation Army. So he's an interesting gentleman. He also has been cited for his work in running a sheltered workshop and he, along with Senator Allen Cranston, was granted an honorary doctor's degree for his work in small rural schools. To sum it up very quickly, Jonathan Sher says Jim runs as good a small rural school as any he's seen in the country.

He's married, has two boys, and he's presently on a sabbatical paid for by his school system studying the difference over a 12-year span of students who are allowed in the state of New Hampshire to start school either at 6 or 7 years of age. Jim, it's a pleasure to have you in South Georgia. He's a country boy, also, by the way, who stayed home. He was born and reared in the same community where he now serves as principal. Jim, we're glad to have you.

Introduction

I have certainly enjoyed the southern hospitality, but I have to say that most of you talk funny. And leave it to Paul DeLargy to cross the Mason-Dixon line and find somebody by the name of Grant to come down and talk with you.

I, too, will open with a story--whether it's a true one or not, you'll have to decide. In a small rural high school, a young lady was teaching her

social studies lesson. She asked the students who had signed the Declaration of Independence, and she decided that she would choose Jonathan to answer. She said, "Jonathan, who signed the Declaration of Independence?"

Jonathan looked at the teacher and said, "I don't know who signed that damned thing."

She said, "You can't talk like that in class. You take your social studies book and you go home and you come back tomorrow and I'll ask you that question again."

So, to make a short story long, the next day, when the young man came back to class, she said, "Jonathan, who signed the Declaration of Independence?"

"Look, Teach," he answered, "I told you yesterday; I'm going to tell you again today: I don't know who signed that damned thing."

"Have it on your own terms," she said.

That night she called the boy's father. She told him, "Mr. Sher, I'm having a terrible, terrible time with your son. I'd like to enlist your support--anything you could do to help me."

With that, Mr. Sher replied, "I'll do anything to support the teachers. What do you want me to do?"

"I'm going to ask your son, Jonathan, a question. When you hear his response, I know that you'll take the appropriate action."

"I'll be there," assured Mr. Sher.

So, to make a long story longer, the next day, Mr. Sher hid in the closet in his son's classroom. The teacher conducted her class as usual. After she dismissed her students, she turned to Jonathan and said, "It's up to you, Jonathan. I have to ask you a question." So he stayed.

"Jonathan," she said to him, "I asked you a question two days ago and I asked you a question yesterday. I'm going to repeat myself and ask you the same question today: Who signed the Declaration of Independence?"

He said, "Look, Teach, I told you three days ago; I told you yesterday; I'm going to tell you again today: I don't know who signed that damned thing!"

Just then the closet door burst open. Jonathan's father flew out, grabbed Jonathan by the shirt, and demanded, "Son, if you signed it, you tell her!"

Rural Education in New Hampshire

That's got nothing to do with rural schools. What I'd like to do is share with you some things that work well for me. I'd like to share with you my educational philosophy. I don't expect every one of you to go away saying it fits your situation because I know there is such a diversity from one rural section to another. But I've had some things work well for me. I want to share with you a theme about the families that our children live in--the families of the home, the school, the community, and the church. These are things I feel strongly about and I'd like to tell you about them.

Before I do that, I need to tell you what my job is. I'm a teaching principal, which means that I teach two grades and I'm the principal of a school. A lot of people say, "My goodness, he's a school administrator!" Well, let me explain what a teaching principal is in downtown rural New Hampshire. A kid throws up, I put the kitty litter on it. I'm the one who gets to school a half-hour early and shovels the steps and salts and sands and chops the ice. That's basically what a teaching principal does.

I'm assigned to a very small school in our district. Our district is composed of nine very diverse communities that have bound themselves together to form one unified school district. We all operate with basically the

same philosophies. We have very poor communities; we have very affluent communities.

One day in 1981, my phone rang. It was Jonathan Sher, saying that he was looking for a school in the northeast part of the country to research. He was looking for eight schools, and he was considering my school. I received the good news that, in fact, my school was selected. And what that did for me...I wish that every one of you could have someone come and do the same thing in your schools.

Jonathan came and worked about 15 hours a day for five days. He and his partner, Faith Dunn, from Dartmouth, went through every single phase of my school, talking to parents, school board members, students, high school students, to find out what happened to them at the elementary level. The only way I can describe it is it was like having someone come in and take an x-ray of your school and your program to see if it's well and to see if there's anything broken. I knew that it could go one way or the other.

Now I've got to tell that Declaration story all over again. It gave me a chance to have someone who's a well respected educator come in and validate the things that I've been doing. When he did the study, he came up with three very distinct areas contributing to why things are working so well at the school.

The Staff

The first thing he came up with was the staff. I don't know if any of you have ever had a chance to visit or spend time in some of your large schools. Or, heaven forbid, have any of you ever had the experience of serving with teachers in New York? You need to see the difference between inner-city school teachers and rural school teachers. The staff in our district and in my school are jacks-of-all-trades. They do administrative work.

They're nurses. They're custodians. They do all types of things--the same kinds of things that you people do here in the rural South.

In the city, it's a different type of atmosphere. They are more unionized. Every summer I go to New York and teach for two weeks on Long Island. The teachers there have a handbook. You have to see it in order to believe it: they have to come to school at a specific time and they have to leave immediately after school. If they do anything extra, the union says they have to get paid for it. They can work only so many recesses. They can work only so many activities. It's absolutely the most appalling thing I've ever had the chance to witness. If I brought that back to New Hampshire, they'd lock me out of the state. In our small schools, we have to be very, very flexible and--the word I like to use--"broadbased." We have to be able to teach many, many disciplines.

Does anybody here teach double grades? I have double grades in my school. I have three combination classes: second and third, fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth. You know, when I listen to some of the city teachers talk about departmentalizing fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, and one teacher at the fourth-grade level is responsible for teaching a math and a science, I think, my Lord, you're on a honeymoon. Nevertheless, even when I see what some of us have to do in the small schools, I know I wouldn't trade. I feel that I'm a bigger person and more well-rounded by having the opportunity to experience all the different areas.

The Administration

Another area that Jonathan and Faith Dunn picked was the central office.

Let's talk about superintendents. There's an interesting thing I find about superintendents. I certainly don't want to downgrade them, but so

many times they end up being so overwhelmed with the business end of running schools that they don't have time for education.

Are there any principals here? Sometimes principals are guilty of that, but not so much as superintendents. We've been very, very lucky in our area to have superintendents who are educational leaders first and politicians second.

I'd like to describe what the central office looked like when Jonathan was there to investigate. It was interesting for him to come in and cite that our central school district was different and very, very supportive. When you have a nine-town system, you tend to think that, somewhere along the line, someone's going to be shortchanged. First of all, we have not had an adversary relationship with our superintendent's office in almost 10 years. There have been no major disagreements. We haven't had to file grievances with the teachers' union against the superintendent. We have a thing called a "high-trust level." Many people preach having faith and trust in our fellow human beings, but we have a high-trust level.

Do you remember growing up back in the '40s and '50s?--if anyone here is that old? When two men met and made eye contact, they shook on it, and it was "solid." That's how I grew up. I grew up in the '40s and '50s with the idea that a man's word was his bond. With teacher unions today, with everything being put into writing, with all the contracts that apply here and there, we don't have the old-fashioned trust level that we used to enjoy. But I can look my superintendent in the eye and have a conversation with him--and his word is gold. And I can say that about the assistant superintendent as well.

When we formed our school system quite a few years ago, we actually had workshops that were devoted to putting on the table a thing called "developing a trust level." That sounds so simple. But it means we can look

one another in the eye and our word is good. It means that the staff trust their principals, the principals trust their superintendent, and the superintendent trusts the school board.

I'd like to describe for you how we administer the nine towns. We have administrators from every single town forming what we call an administrative team; the superintendent has the same voice as a teaching principal. There are 23 of us. We sit around the table and discuss issues. When we vote, the superintendent's vote is equal to that of a department head or a teaching principal. The voting body rules; the majority rules.

We have a joint council. Some of you may have it; I would be interested to know if you do. We have a joint education council which I feel has brought together the community, the school, and every other single group. Every other Thursday afternoon, we have a meeting that takes place from about 12:00 o'clock until 5:00. We have a group of people called the Joint Ed Council that is composed of the superintendent, school board members, principals, teachers, and--hang on--students. All educational matters of any consequence are brought before the Joint Ed Council and thoroughly hashed. Students (these are high school students) have a chance to sit there and have input into some of the decisions that are being made at the school district level.

One thing that has been very helpful is we teach in small schools by choice. I would hope that all of you here have been assigned to your building because you have chosen to be in a small school setting instead of a large school setting. Both of our superintendents live in small towns and their children go to small schools (I'm talking about schools that have anywhere from 45 to 70 students). Our two superintendents have children who go to the small schools by choice. They could afford to live in the larger towns. They could afford to send their children to a larger school, but they have,

by choice, put their children in the small schools. I think that tells you what the commitment is on the part of central office administration.

I have something else I would like to share with you that may or may not be appropriate for some of your schools. When was the last time your school district conducted a blue-ribbon study? In 1975, our school district put aside some money and brought in some Gallup people. We put together a poll to find out where we'd been and where the taxpayers would like to see us go. That document covered such things as vocational problems. It asked the question, "Do school boards spend too much time running the schools and not working with policy?" It was like giving the community a blank check. They were told nothing is sacred in the school system

This study was initiated by our superintendent, who had gone before the school board, so we had an in-depth study of all areas of our school systems. If you haven't done this in your school system in a long time, it's something I would recommend that you do.

The Community

The third thing that Jonathan picked out is the area that I'd like to spend most of my time on: the community. If you have a pencil, I want you to write down that the community is your mobile loan. It's right before us, and so many of us don't know it.

I'm in a small community of 700 people. A bigger community would have many, many more than that. Small communities have anywhere from 800 to 6,000 people. So many times, people will come to me and say, "How do we get the community to do this? How do we get the community to do that?" I tell them, "Ask." You walk up and knock on someone's forehead and say, "Can you do this? Can we have that? Are you available for this?" Faith Dunn, in collaboration with others, wrote in a recently published work that

utilization of the skills and incline contributions was reported by one-third of the principals.

This morning, before this session, we heard a report by some people who are using an interesting approach to education. They're running a pig farm and sheep operation and doing some building. They could not do it without the support of the community.

I would like to tell you how I feel about asking the people of a community for something. I went to Temple--talk about a quick trip. I had taught the fifth grade for one year in Dublin. One Friday, after this one year of experience, a knock came at my door, and I was asked if I'd like to be principal in the next town over. I said I knew simple math. I also said that I knew that if I were to go to that particular community, I'd be the fifth principal in 24 months--which isn't a record, but I'd say that's a pretty good average. But I went to Temple to be principal, and there were a lot of problems and issues in the community. The people felt very distant from their school; they weren't involved in it and didn't know what they were funding. As educators, we just don't go out and tell the community what they're funding. We just keeping spending and doing and never share information.

So, back in 1968, I started up a lot of activities that would encourage the community and the school to work hand-in-hand. These are activities that are fun but turn into what I would say are good academic lessons. For example, up in rural New Hampshire, if we want to go to a museum, we have to go to Boston, which is about 75 miles away. When the bus costs $300, how can we justify taking a fifth and sixth grade class with only 25 students? What we do is tell the people in the community that the bus is going to Boston next Friday and we need to fill the bus. So, whenever we take a

field trip, we take our senior citizens with us and ask them to pay X number of dollars per person so that we can properly fund the bus trips.

We not only take three trips to Boston during the year, but we also take overnight trips. We're rural enough so that if we want to go to Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, it would be about a four-hour drive. There's no way that we can leave, drive down and visit, and be rested and get back in the same day. Again, it's a matter of telling the senior citizens in the community that there's a trip to Mystic Seaport and we need people to come in and increase the number of bodies going so that we can rent hotel rooms and get the group rate.

What this means is that we have a chance to go over and over and over again to all these different wonderful places and the trips don't have to be academic. One time I sent a notice home saying: "We're going to go to Boston to see the Barnum & Bailey Circus and we're hoping to fill the bus." We had to charter a second bus because of the number of adults who had never before had a chance to see the circus. Appealing to the senior citizens of your community is one way you can both increase the size of the learning experience for the children and offer a broader experience to the citizens of the community.

Starting Out

I want to digress: In our community, we place children in school in a different way from many, many school districts in the country. It's unpopular in many states; it's very popular in some places. We say to parents, "You don't have to send your child to school until the child is seven." Consequently, we have more children not going to first grade at age six than any school district in America. Seventy percent of our parents don't send their children till they're seven.

Once again, I'm going to pick on New York. Here, children can come to school if they are six before January first. As a consequence, they have horrendous problems with "fall boys." These schools have a tremendous failure rate and end up having to do a lot of remediation, a lot of summer school, a lot of tutoring.

If I can project this way, way down the road, what this means is that, by saying to the parents, "You have the choice: your child can come to first grade at six or come to first grade at seven," we don't have the failure rate, the discipline problems, the remedial problems, the speech therapy problems. We don't have the emotional disturbance problems. We've greatly decreased many of these problems that a lot of school districts come up on in education today.

This means that when children are placed in the proper grade, their learning rate can be varied according to child development needs. And you can then stand back and look at your SAT scores. I want to tell you your SATs will be up there; in the fifth and sixth grades, the SATs are up there. Children are comfortable. At this point, when your SAT scores are up, your ugly parent conferences are down because you're not having to tell the parents that their children are having difficulty or are in trouble or whatever else the problem might be. You can then start to do some nonacademic things. So far this year, I've been able to shut down at noon and take the kids down to stack six cords of wood for a gentleman who had a heart attack. We've gone down and cleaned some yards of some of our senior citizens. In the wintertime, we're able to shut down late in the morning and take the children skiing without having parents upset that their children are missing 20 minutes of math here, 15 minutes of language there, and a reading lesson. We're able to do this because the children are well-rounded and well-based, and they do well academically.

If you look around at the communities that have tried the late start with kids to try and get some of the benefits, you will see that it usually doesn't succeed. It doesn't succeed because they don't do a good job of bringing in the community and working with them and doing a thing called "community ed" to educate the parents.

Working Together: The School and the Community

Just recently, we had some people from Australia come in and visit us. I'm sure many schools would say, "Oh! Some people from Australia are coming up here. The state of New South Wales is sending some people and they're going to sit and visit the school." We, however, seized this opportunity to form a working partnership between the school and the community. Through the embassy, we were able to borrow a flag. As a matter of fact, I have to admit that I called the embassy in Washington and told them that one of our visitors was second cousin to the Queen. So they loaned us a flag--it was a beautiful flag. We flew that flag the week that they were here. We had a tea with 50 or 60 people. Then, at night, we had a tremendous turnout of people, ranging from babies through senior citizens, who came in and had a chance to meet the people and have some meaningful dialogue.

Many times, when we start talking about schools working with the community, we're thinking that the community has to do something for the school. But the school can do something for the community. The school doing something for the community, or for a member of the community, will greatly affect the children. They will go away with the knowledge that we should be sharing and doing and caring for somebody out there.

I need to share with you something that happened. I haven't had a chance to share this with Jonathan since he was in Temple, but it's an example of the kind of caring and sharing that goes on between the school and the community. Last year, the mother of an eight-year-old girl who was in

one of our classes at Temple came into my school. This woman was having difficulty manipulating her fingers and I asked her if there was something I could do to help her. She said she was having a recurrence of cancer. The woman was 31 years old. She said that it didn't look good, and then, within that week, her tests came back--she had terminal cancer and it was just a matter of time. Within days she went into the hospital.

Normally when we send a notice home, we're notifying parents of a PTA meeting or telling them that next week is Halloween and we need them to send costumes. Sometimes, when we're very close to a situation, we don't know that we're doing something unusual until someone like Jonathan Sher comes in and says, "You're doing something unusual." And it wasn't until a mother from New Jersey who moved into Temple told me that they'd traveled around the country and had never been in a school that sent a notice home saying, "Would you sign up and sit with a mother while she dies?" that I realized we were doing something unusual.

Now think that one out. All we did was to quickly hold a meeting of community and children and parents and say that one of our mothers was dying of cancer and that her wish was to have no chemotherapy, no radiation treatments. Her wish was, "I want to come home and die."

Can this take place? The answer is "Yes," not "Well, let's think about it." It's not, "Well, how?" The answer is "Yes, of course you can." If a mother wants to come home and die, yes, we'll help her. We'll send notices home with the children saying, "Will people come and sit around the clock on shifts and allow this woman to die at home?"

We did that. And we stood back and said, "It takes a lot of money. Where does this money come from?" It meant that the children and the parents and senior citizens had to come together as one and raise funds. We took some books from a bookstore and sold them; we sold coffee and chili. In

one day, we made $3,300. We put that money into a very special savings account.

We, as a school and a community, worked together to help one of our own. Now you could stand back and say, "Well, we've got to keep the church separated from the school, and we've got to keep the school separated from the community, and we certainly can't interfere with what's going on at home." We set up all these divisions, but I say they're all together. They're one. When we start to separate, then I think we have a breakdown.

So, to make a short story long, she did have an opportunity to come home and she had a very comfortable death--if there is such a thing as a comfortable death. I swear that she lived two-and-a-half months because of the loving and caring that students and parents showed her during that time.

You will see this story of how the parents and the kids came together to help her in the February issue of Reader's Digest. I hope that you'll read the story and think of this woman. And think: the reason that Reader's Digest jumped at a chance to write a story about this is because it's a situation that can be exported, whether it's to Arkansas, Georgia, or Florida. The school and the community can come together and make it work.

I have a nice letter I'd like to read to you, but before I read the letter, I want to ask you, do you know how good it made the kids feel to do something for somebody else? Now, is that an academic learning situation? I don't know.

Here's the letter I want to read to you:

Dear Friends,

Over the years, I've witnessed many times the greatness of the American spirit: compassion for others, creativity and meeting challenges, and the determination to accomplish our goals are significant attributes of our people. One evidence of the spirit is the vitality of caring and concerned neighbors like you. Your special gifts of life to help ease the suffering and pain of one among you who is so desperately

ill cannot be measured. Your involvement exemplifies the highest tradition of service to others and you set a shining example of the true meaning of being Good Samaritans.

With my best wishes,
Ronald Reagan

This letter was sent to my school. And don't you think that my kids were thrilled to get a letter from the President congratulating them for what they did?

Are you ready for this? Ripley's Believe It or Not: Practice makes perfect. We had the first town band in the country. Ready for that? And we're still going. It meets in my school every Monday night. I'll tell you, if you want to have a good case of goose pimples, come down and listen to the band play because what you'll see is fourth-graders playing next to their grandfathers. It's a multi-age-level band. It's absolutely unbelievable. And they just got an invitation to play in Washington on the Fourth of July.

The Four Families

I have something else that I would like to share with you. I read in Newsweek an article on handguns. Recall what I said before about the four world areas, the four family areas of the school, the church, the community, the home, all bonded together. I'd like to read an excerpt from the Newsweek magazine:

> At present our society sorely lacks a sense of mutual responsibility in community, a sense that we're all in this together. As things currently stand, it's more realistic to suspect that a citizen has been trained in the use of a handgun rather than first aid.

You know, for some reason, we've all gone off on our own. We've had such a separation of things that we seem to lack this feeling of community, this feeling that we're all in this together.

I'd like to have a nickel for every time I get a call from someone in the community saying, "Boy dressed like this, with this color bicycle violated this

traffic rule." It means that we're having more community-parenting than we've ever had before.

I was trying to think of a way that I could show you how I feel about the four families a child lives in, and the best way that I could come up with is to use the analogy of a juggler. I feel that the four family areas that a child has to live in and work with are the school, the community, the church, and the home. I put it in the form of a juggler in order to use the symbolism of how difficult it is to keep all four families up in the air.

I would like to take just one minute and tell you how I feel about the four families. I feel that never before have our children needed the support and the security of the small schools like they do now.

The community family

When we were growing up, we were told about responsibility to our town, to our state, and to our country. Having pride was a quality to be proud of. What has happened to some of that pride?

Have you been to the movies recently? Do you sit in the theatre and ask, "Whatever happened to movie house manners?" Do you know that term, or have you forgotten it? "Movie house manners." When you went into a movie house, you didn't talk. You didn't move around once the show started unless the part got scary. You certainly didn't smoke and you took your hat off. There isn't that sense today. That's just one symptom of where there isn't the community support and the community pressure to help kids understand what some of the expectations are. Children are getting very mixed messages and signals from the community.

The church family

Many children are lucky to have the loving support of a church family. However, many children are not. Ideally, a child has the opportunity to hear a meaningful message at least once a week with an additional message from a

youth group or religious class. The number of children not exposed to this great experience have to look to the home or family or school for this kind of a model. And I like to use the word "model" because I feel kids need a model to follow. Kids need definition.

The home family

Is your divorce rate as high as it is up North? It's absolutely appalling! Anywhere from a fourth to a third of our children now come from broken homes. Today, we have more children from single-family homes than ever before. We have a record number of latch-key children taking care of themselves after school. We have a record number of reported cases of child abuse and neglect. There is an increasing number of children who are now expected to raise themselves. We have more children coming from homes where the amount of alcohol that's consumed is inappropriate. One-fifth of all the babies born in the country are born to teenagers. Do you know what that means? Do you know how many kids today are going to be raised by kids?

To those of you who attended the preceding session on daycare, I'll tell you that I find it scary to be teaching children who are being raised by children. I wonder what condition the children will be in when I receive them. Many parents have turned over the raising of their children to the television set. Would you let a stranger walk into your home and sit down and influence your child when you know nothing about the stranger? Are you sitting there saying, "Not me!" But day after day after day, kids go home and they watch those terrible soap operas and some of those terrible programs. I don't know about you, but I find it very difficult to go in and find something decent and palatable to watch on family television.

I want to recommend a book. This book, The Hurried Child, is one that I brought to Georgia to give to Jonathan Sher. Have any of you seen this

book? I want you to write the title down: it's called The Hurried Child Growing Up Too Fast, Too Soon, and it's by Dr. David Alpine. Everything that you know as a parent has been written about in here.

See this beautiful girl? Beautiful hair, special eyebrows, and the earrings? How old is she? She's 10 years old. And what Dr. Alpine does is write about the designer-name clothing, the makeup for kids from ages four to eight, piercing the ears, the very special hairdos. Parents forget when they see a child like this. They forget that they're talking to a 10-year-old, and they think, "My goodness, I'm talking to an adult."

This is a book I would strongly recommend that you read.

I read an interesting study. In the '30s, parents had two-and-a-half hours of contact time with their children. Does anybody know what the figure is today? Then it was two-and-a-half hours. Today, the average contact time that the parent has with the child is 12½ minutes.

Now I guess you're sitting there saying, "Not me, boy. I spend a lot of time with my kids." I'm going to tell you something. I read that and I wanted to deny it, but I'm going to have to get in and take a very hard look at that and examine my own backyard on that one. I think all of us, particularly fathers, have to look at the time we spend with our child. It's not that wives and mothers don't spend a lot of time at their jobs, but I think that sometimes fathers get over-committed and even spend more time at their job. When we first look at contact time, then at the responsibility that's put on teachers, we see that teachers have more contact time with students than parents have with their own children. That's scary. That's a lot of responsibility.

The school family

The fourth family that a child lives in is his school family. For a great many children, school is the only safe haven. It's the only sane place, the

only quiet spot. I'm of the persuasion that this safe haven that we create can be better created in a small-school setting, where the teachers have fewer children in class. I believe that there's a chance for more loving and caring. It's a natural by-product of the small schools to be able to have that kind of caring.

I want to read a couple of excerpts from an interesting study that was done by James Coleman back in the sixties. This study was very controversial. Coleman examined 600,000 students and found that there are, basically, only two things that make a significant difference in educational achievement--and it's not classroom size or teacher preparation or caseload. Number one, it's the student's feeling of self-worth. And number two, it's the child's socio-economic background. We can't change a child's socio-economic background, but we certainly can change what happens to the child between the hours of 8:30 and 3:00. Once again, that's a heavy responsibility.

Talking to some of the teachers from New York, I learned that these teachers barely know the parents they deal with. They don't know the parents. Therefore, they don't know what the parents' expectations are and don't know what appropriate action to take when there's a discipline problem.

I met someone this morning who has a first-through-twelfth-grade school, and I thought, "Isn't that dynamite--having children and being able to follow them for a 12-year span and to know the parents?"

I think we all have had cases when we've been creative with our discipline. I feel that, by knowing the parents, we can know what is appropriate and what is effective. I would like to read to you something that made the front page of the newspaper when I was young:

> When Temple principal Charles "Jim" Grant caught a youngster carving his initials in a chair, he called a halt.
> "But you never told us we couldn't do it," came the reply.
> "You're right," shot back the principal, "but since you've done it, we don't want the chair. Take it home."

At 3:00, when it came time to leave, the student seemed to have forgotten his windfall. Principal Grant insisted that he have the furniture, so off he went to the bus, lugging his chair amid stares.

Meanwhile Mr. Grant had called home to let the parents know that the chair wasn't swiped and what the situation was. They cooperated fully and the chagrined student spent the night refinishing furniture.

He returned the next morning carrying lunch, books, and chair....

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN SMALL SCHOOLS

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Introduction

There has been limited research on the administration of special education in rural and small schools in the United States and, as a result, not much published on the subject. This lack of attention results from the isolation that comes with being rural and small in numbers. But I also believe that rural inhabitants are survivors by nature, and so they find solutions--without attracting a great deal of attention. However, these solutions do not always meet the standards set for all special education programs because rural schools may not always have the trained personnel or the wide variety of services found in larger, more populated districts.

The literature refers to major problems of wasteland areas, low evaluations of tax bases that cause limited financial resources, and scattered populations that require increased costs to provide services equal to those provided by other districts. The literature also refers to problems of working with related agencies and services in expanded geographical areas, difficulties in recruiting specialized personnel to rural areas, and difficulties in expediting the acquisition of assessment information. In addition, the problems inherent in administering programs that are spread over a large geographical area with great variation in rural and small-town thinking are many and ever-changing. Administrators of rural programs will place a high value on general knowledge of alternative/pragmatic solutions as opposed to a high level of technical knowledge.

The teaching personnel may have to wear many hats in a rural setting. They may find themselves, of necessity, serving in such capacities as diagnosis and referral, general advocacy, consultation for regular class teachers,

and short-term, direct instruction. They may be the only semblance of service for exceptional children in the area.

In this session, I plan to take each part of a special education program and analyze how it could be developed in a rural area. I will emphasize the uniqueness of each step in a rural setting and will discuss possible strategies to accommodate the potential problems caused by these differences. My goal is to make those responsible for rural services alert to what can be done without ignoring that poor quality might occur without conscientious leadership.

The Organizational Structure

The first step in developing comprehensive services for exceptional children in rural communities would be to set up an organizational pattern that would give maximum supervision to isolated services. An organization that works well in rural settings would establish the principal as an on-the-spot supervisor with consultative support from a central office director of special education.

Program Philosophy

The second step in developing services would be to decide on a program philosophy. This philosophy should guide the program in providing services that involve each child in an appropriate free education. It should provide due process procedures for exceptional children and their parents, and should include carrying out all procedures required by the state and Public Law (PL) 94-142. The philosophy should also spell out the kinds of services to be offered by the district.

The Needs Assessment

Since the extent of services offered is greatly influenced by the numbers of children and resources, the third step would be to conduct a needs assessment. This assessment would start by looking at any school or community

service currently available to serve exceptional children. Then the next step would be to conduct a "child find" on children from birth to age 21. This search will require involving news media, school personnel, civic organizations, service agencies, and medical societies. In Georgia, the Learning Resource Systems will give information on the number of children who potentially need services in each type of exceptionality. At this stage, particular attention can be given to deciding if currently enrolled children are receiving appropriate services. The last aspect of the needs assessment would be to analyze, in relation to needed services, personnel, physical plants, transportation options, equipment and supplies, and community resources.

The Advisory Committee

A rural district covering a wide expanse will need an active advisory committee to the program for exceptional children. This committee should be made up of a balance of consumers and professionals who are knowledgeable about and interested in services for exceptional children. The members may be parents, professionals, members of community organizations or agencies, Department of Human Resources personnel, members of ministerial associations, and so on. This committee should be charged with the responsibility of educating the community about the program; making advisory decisions concerning program service directions; and obtaining knowledge on community feeling about the program and reporting it back to the community. Since long distances may impede travel, it would be important to set up a regular meeting schedule and carefully plan each meeting in order to obtain the maximum benefit to the program.

Services

After the needs assessment information is in and the advisory committee is functional, decisions on establishing services or expanding services will need to be made. Highest priority should be placed on serving children who

can profit least from regular education alone. Because of distance, itinerant and, possibly, resource services will have to be carefully scheduled and transportation arranged. Segregated classes, centers, and resources rooms will need classroom facilities equal to regular classrooms in settings integrated with regular class children. Hospital/homebound services may need careful planning to be sure that there are certified personnel in each area of the district and that travel allowances are arranged. Since sparse populations may not present extensive hospital/homebound needs, these positions may not be full-time. Hence, it would be wise to have selected special education personnel obtain the hospital/homebound certification so they would be available if a need occurred in their area.

If services for low-incidence exceptionalities are to be contracted, the contracts should be for a given amount for specified services in order to eliminate the chances for open-ended and unexpected charges. Financial aid may be available from the state or from flow-through funds to help pay for these contracts or for unique transportation needs.

PL 94-142 requires that each district have structured placement and appeals procedures. Developing these procedures should probably start with the in-service of the regular and special education staff emphasizing both diagnostic information to be collected for referrals and steps to take in referring and placing children. These in-services should be directed at improving the quality of referrals and parent communication. In rural areas, reaching parents to share information and to notify them of meetings may be more difficult than in other settings.

Recruiting Specialists

Next, the district will need to plan how to get efficient and quality evaluations for placement committee information. Getting doctors for physical evaluations, specialists for hearing and vision evaluations, psychologists for

intellectual and behavioral evaluations, and social workers for home and environmental evaluations will take a lot of planning. Such personnel are not so available in rural areas as in urban areas, but rural districts are required by law to have quality information; otherwise, they could face parent appeals or liability suits. Placement decisions have to be approved by the parents; if the parents cannot agree, the school must plan to conduct meetings for negotiating the decisions. To keep travel to a minimum and to insure good attendance, placement committee meetings should be scheduled enough in advance to get on the calendars of these specialists. Furthermore, to make the travel worthwhile for these specialists, several referrals should be on the agenda for review.

Recruiting Personnel

Rural districts have a problem in recruiting and maintaining quality certified personnel. Since many individuals coming out of training programs do not want to teach in rural areas, it is a good policy to encourage local residents to get the needed training to serve the district. In Georgia, staff development money can be directed toward this purpose. The district may need to arrange released time for the selected personnel to get the necessary training.

Another approach is to review all personnel in the district and be sure they are assigned to services for which they are best qualified. This may not be popular with some teachers because they may currently be teaching out-of-field, closer to home, and they will resist driving longer distances.

Confidentiality

Another area that requires planning in a rural district is the establishment of confidentiality procedures for placement files on exceptional children. Files should be kept in the most accessible location with sign-up procedures for reviewing them. The policies on eligibility for viewing records and the

sign-up list should give evidence of confidentiality and will help avoid liability. A second step in establishing confidentiality would be setting up an in-service for the staff on liability for breaches of confidentiality.

Conclusion

Finally, let me say that there are many rural districts with efficient programs serving exceptional children. None of these programs happened by chance. They are the result of serious planning and following guidelines.

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THE RURAL COMMUNITY: FROM CATALOGS TO COMPUTERS

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The Rural Community of the Past

As time goes by, things change. But from month to month and from year to year, the changes come so slowly that we hardly notice them until we start remembering "how things used to be." Even then our memory is selective, and we tend to dwell on either "the good old days"--which were seldom as good as we recall--or how tough things used to be. The grandfather, walking with his grandchild through snow drifts, recalls that when he was a child, the snow used to be as "high as your head." As they walk along, the child's cap is barely visible over the snow banks. Time, and two feet of additional height, tend to change one's perspective.

Regardless of what we recall about the past, rural schools and rural communities, like the old grey mare, "ain't what they used to be." Rural communities and their residents of 50 years past--prior to radio, television, interstate highways, school buses, and consolidation--were much more isolated and self-sufficient. Most rural community residents got most of what they needed from within the community, or they just didn't get it: health care from the local family doctor; mail from the numbered box at the post office; groceries from the grocery that "waited on" customers; reading and writing from the neighborhood school. Going to high school, for the few that did go, often meant that the 14-year-old left home and "boarded" in town. Goods the community didn't supply often arrived by mail after much measuring, sizing, and anticipation of child growth, as the family filled out the fall and spring orders torn from the centerfolds of Sears and Wards catalogs. The outside world was just that--outside. Trips to the county-seat town or a regional small city often occasioned as much advance planning as a 500-mile trip does

today. The occasions were infrequent and these "short" trips--short by today's standards--were often memorable.

The rural community schools of that era, without competition from radio, television, or frequent travel, were often the principal suppliers of contact with the outside world. The teachers were among the most highly educated and cosmopolitan members of the community. In a small community world, largely inward-oriented, the school was typically one of the few windows on the outside world.

The family, along with the school and church, was a dominant institution --often by default. Being largely confined to their community, families spent much more time together, both mentally and physically. And in the absence of other diversions, the family interacted much more frequently with the only worlds having much meaning: those of the family, neighborhood, church, community, and school. The interactions were predominately characterized by having people, more than events or concepts, as the focus of discussion.

In this kind of relatively self-sufficient rural community, the "sense of community" was strong, and community--its people, services, and institutions --was central to the life of most residents. The sense of community, and participation in the community, was reinforced by everybody, every day, in all aspects of life. It was constantly being reinforced in the grocery store, in the post office, in the doctor's office, in the school, the church, and the family. There were few problems with community boundaries or community identity. Everybody knew what their community was and how they fit into it.

My point is not that rural life was necessarily better or worse 50 years ago, it was just different. The community was different. The family was different. The school was different. Often what was being reinforced by the small community--as Sinclair Lewis so aptly put it--was prejudice, suspicion, privilege for a few, and parochialism. On the other hand, the idea of an

"identity crisis" was a non-sequitor for most rural, small-community residents.

The Rural Community of Today

But 50 years have produced dramatic changes, and the small rural town of today bears little resemblance, other than in name and place, to the rural community of the 1920s and '30s. Most of the changes have produced a centrifugal effect on small town institutions, services, and the perceptions and interests of the people. If the small town of the '20s and '30s was inner-directed, most of the same towns today are outer-directed.

Technology can claim major responsibility. The media, especially television, have opened a large number of windows out of the rural community and have brought about a greater awareness of what's going on in Washington, New York, and Beirut than what is happening on Main Street. Improved highways and cars have collapsed hours into minutes and greatly expanded the size of the "community" in which rural people live their lives and obtain their services.

These technological changes have set off a chain reaction of related changes. Small-town family doctors have become specialists in clinics or hospital-based practices several towns away; grocery stores have given way to self-service supermarkets in larger towns; the Sears and Wards catalogues have been replaced by regional shopping centers and discount stores; community schools have often been replaced by school buses delivering students to schools that serve several towns.

The economic base of a rural locality is seldom confined to a single community but often exists in an entire region. With shrinking employment in agriculture and not enough factories for every town, commuting to work has transformed many rural localities into "bedroom" towns. The noon whistle, signaling time for dinner, is no longer of much value in reaching the ears of

the community's workers. Most rural towns are still a place to live, but they are seldom a place to live and work and shop and go to the doctor and go to school.

All these changes have contributed to improving the level of living of most rural residents over what it was at the brink of the Great Depression. Choosing an RFD address, as many have done during the 1970s, no longer necessarily means being deprived of access to quality services--provided that these residents have cars and are willing to travel. In fact, it has been noted that many of the rural disadvantaged today are those who are confined to what their locality has to offer--jobs, health care, retail services, and other areas (Diilman and Hobbs, 1982). Everyone else goes to a lot of different places for a lot of different things.

But as the rural level of living has gone up and rural people have become participants in "regional communities," the sense of community in each locality has diminished. While at one time everybody made the locality their business, today hardly anyone does. With all the dispersed and diversionary activities going on today, the people of many small rural communities are only partially involved in community affairs. There are few agencies or organizations whose primary concern is the area of their location; most serve a larger clientele and are outwardly oriented.

Perhaps this outer direction of rural communities today is what prompted a newspaper editor in a medium-sized city to ask me recently why so many of the smaller towns seemed so dead and lacking in community spirit and activity. A population (often a larger one than 50 years ago) lives there, but not much seems to be going on socially or economically.

Reestablishing a Sense of Community

So what does all this have to do with rural schools? I suggest that the rural school is often in a strategic position to create or restore a sense of

community where it's lacking. We don't mean that we need a return to the self-sufficient communities of a half-century ago--even if that were possible, there are serious questions about whether anyone would benefit. But what seem to be appropriate and valuable to the small community of the 1980s are the restoration of the sense of community and the establishment of community participation and what these might produce by way of a greater degree of community self-determination. As a result of changes, rural communities today tend to be influenced largely by factors over which they have little or no control. This has prompted some serious analyses suggesting that a greater degree of self-determination should be a prominent rural community development goal (Gilford, et al., 1981).

A Window to the Inside

As noted, the rural community school was once one of the few windows to the outside world. But many rural communities today are so well-ventilated that the existence of the community in any sense other than as a place to live is in doubt. Few organizations or agencies take the community as a major focus--and those that do, such as local government, usually proceed with little local input unless a particularly controversial issue emerges.

The small-community school should take the opportunity to direct a part of its effort toward becoming a window to the inside, in the name of both meaningful education and community development. The school must increase awareness of local history, local economy, and local government to have a foundation for stronger community identity and participation.

Community developers describe community development as a process in which the various segments of a locality participate to discover common goals (or sources of conflict) and collaborate in achieving them (Christenson and Robinson, 1980). Such a process doesn't occur without some initiative and doesn't proceed without some self-study and analysis of the locality. It seems

to me that this particular two-day program is filled with examples of rural schools that have taken initiative and moved toward expanding educational opportunities for students while, at the same time, contributing to community development. Clearly, projects such as the School-Based Development Enterprises in Brooks County, Georgia, and in Arkansas are examples of killing two birds with the same stone. Similarly, the experiences reported by Temple, New Hampshire, show how the school can be central to bringing diverse elements together to produce a community focus.

As impressive as the accomplishments of these projects are, I don't believe it is necessary for a school to take on some bold new project or venture called "community development" in order to help create or restore a sense of community. There can be little question that the school is already in a strategic position to contribute to community development. In almost every rural community, the school brings together more residents every day than does any other organization, agency, or business. Furthermore, the school brings together a wider cross-section of the community--rich and poor, town and country, black and white, boys and girls--than does any other community-based organization or agency.

With that potential, what can or should the school do? We offer a couple of suggestions that could be implemented in a lot of different ways, depending on the social climate of the community. They are not spectacular, but they are "do-able" by any school, especially the small, rural school.

Including the Community as an Educational Focus

As school curricula and educational materials become more standardized, little, if any, attention is being devoted to the community as an educational object. Few would argue against teaching rural students state and national government, history, or economics; these subjects are essential in a modern and mobile society and are a common denominator for all students. But it

seems equally defendable that an understanding of place should be a worthy educational objective as well. People are citizens of a state and a country, but they are also citizens of a county and a community. Observation suggests that, with all the windows opening to the outside world, students and their parents have an opportunity to be better informed about the world outside the locality than about the locality itself. This is one of the very significant social changes the past 50 years has produced. The school is no longer the most prominent, and certainly not the only, window to the outside.

We are now in the second generation since television began to occupy a prominent place in every household, and in the third generation since rural communities have become more or less self-sufficient. Consequently, what do today's children and youth (and perhaps their parents) know about the locality and how it operates--its history, its government, its economy, its resources, its natural environment, and so on? What community-based organizations make it their business to document these very real facts of life and educate any sector of the local public about them?

It's axiomatic that community development does not travel far on ignorance. If only a few are aware and concerned about community issues and problems, it stands to reason that only a few are likely to be actively involved in the resolution of these problems. We tend to be more interested and concerned about those things we know.

Thus, we feel that the school can make a major contribution, in the present and the future, to its community's development by emphasizing the community in its educational curriculum. Perhaps a "locality" test might even be devised as a starting point in determining what truths and untruths the students hold. We suspect that such a test would reveal one of the major problems confronting rural community development; that is, that today's rural

community residents, and especially the youth, are not very well-informed about their communities and how they operate.

Students and Community as Educational Resources

One side of the community development equation is awareness and knowledge; the other side is involvement and participation.

A good reason for not including a locality emphasis in the school curriculum is that materials on the subject usually don't exist in any well-organized form. Certainly, there are no textbooks that fill the bill. It's equally unlikely that already heavily scheduled teachers will have the time and inclination to teach about locality. We suggest, therefore, soliciting help from the community--from local government officials, long-time community residents, farmers, bankers, health care providers, local business operators, civic groups. We strongly suspect that in most communities such assistance is there for the asking, but we are equally certain that it will not be volunteered. The initiative most likely will need to come from the school.

There is a good chance that involving the adult community in this project not only will get the necessary educational materials produced, but also will prove to be an educational experience for everyone, as well as an exercise in community participation. It's not often possible to kill three birds with the same stone.

But neither should students be overlooked as an educational resource. Schools show little reluctance in thinking of students as a resource when it comes to sports and other extra-curricular activities, and there should be no less difficulty in rationalizing student production of classroom materials. Again, two or more goals can be accomplished with the same activity: students learn in the process of producing such materials and other students and the community benefit from their use. In general, if it is agreed that students can best learn by experience and that experience is gained in the

service of activities that are useful to the school or community, then it is hard to argue that education and community development haven't been achieved at the same time.

Conclusion

It is ironic, perhaps, to speak of a need for community development and a sense of community in the small rural towns that many perceive to be the epitome of community. But the centrifugal forces of a modern urbanized society have pulled the rural community in many divergent directions, and in the process have siphoned off some of the community's claim on the time and attention of its residents. If this were only a loss of one form of affiliation, then there might be little cause for concern. But residents still look to their communities to provide many important services, including schooling and education. In general, places lacking in community interest, cooperation, and participation usually will also have more difficulty in adding or maintaining community services.

There is nothing mystical about community development. It occurs as a result of people becoming more informed about their community and then acting on that awareness to produce a better quality of life for themselves. But such participation and involvement seldom occur spontaneously; they usually occur in response to the initiatives of some group of individuals or an organization. We feel that the school in the small community today is in a strategic position to take such initiative because, in the small community, it is one of the few organizations remaining that serves the entire community. The school has legitimate reason to include locality education as a part of its role. It has a tradition of depending on community support. We feel that, with these advantages, the school can take the lead in building closer school-community cooperation and collaboration that will prove to be beneficial

to the community, to the school, and to the education of the children, youth, and adults of the community.

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COMPUTERS IN RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS

Outline of a speech by
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Introduction

Rural and small schools are likely to find computers useful in several ways, which we can group under two heads:

1. Administrative Functions
   a. word processing
   b. scheduling
   c. record-keeping

2. Teaching
   a. computer-assisted instruction
   b. testing and grading
   c. telematic additions to resources
   d. computer familiarity

We will briefly look at each of these. First, however, we need to note the special importance of microcomputers.

A computer is an information-processing device. It can:

1. compute--i.e., count, do calculations, etc.

2. record and recall--store and find information

3. communicate--computer communication--telematics

4. automate--word processing or industrial work

Microcomputers are simply computers that need only one microchip as the central processing unit. They are:

1. small

2. relatively inexpensive

3. self-contained

4. usually easily portable

5. highly reliable

6. powerful

7. fast

8. extremely versatile

One of the most important advantages of microcomputers is that individual schools can have and control their own. They are not dependent on specialists or central facilities. Students, teachers, and administrators get instant response, rather than waiting for time-sharing systems.

Let us look at some things we might do with computers.

Word Processing

One of the simplest, but most useful, of computer capabilities is word processing. This is simply the ability of the machine to aid in composing, revising, and printing text.

A couple of years ago, word processing required expensive, specialized machines. Now, an ordinary inexpensive microcomputer can do word processing along with numerous other functions. The same machines used in computer-assisted instruction can be used in the office. This means that school officials need only learn about one brand. School districts need only worry about repairs for one brand.

Word processing has several advantages:

1. An ordinary typist can produce copy as good as a highly-skilled typist.
2. An administrator can often produce his or her own copy without relying on a secretary.
3. Documents, such as letters of recommendation, which need to be produced repeatedly but with minor changes, can be created and reproduced easily.
4. Documents which could not previously be personalized--like grade reports--can be.
5. All of these capabilities save time and money.
6. Word processing is also an important (though low-level) marketable skill to be taught to students. Students can learn while assisting in practical school functions.

Scheduling

One of the repeated tasks that absorbs time and causes headaches for all schools is scheduling. A computerized program can make this easy because:

1. Each teacher's subjects can be entered.
2. The computer tries each available classroom period for each teacher until it arrives at a schedule meeting every need.
3. Each student's course needs are then entered.

4. The computer tries all possible combinations until it has assigned each student to the best possible program, with the most even distribution of students possible among classes.

5. The availability of classrooms is entered.

6. The computer matches need for size, special facilities, and time period to room availability.

7. At the end of the process, the computer's memory contains every teacher's and student's schedule in an easily accessible form.

Record Keeping

Schools and school districts generate documents constantly, many of which need to be stored for long periods of time and accessed quickly. These include:

1. student transcripts
2. teacher records
3. financial records
4. data on colleges
5. files on job applicants
6. records on physical plant
7. reports to funding agencies

A computer costing less than $10,000, complete with hard disk memory and printer, can easily store and access all of these documents.

Computer Assisted Instruction

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) can be used in teaching almost any subject matter. It comes at a variety of levels of complexity and sophistication:

1. Drill and Practice
   a. such as languages, grammar, arithmetic
2. Educational Games
   a. used in teaching basic logic
   b. used in teaching computer familiarity

3. Simulations
   a. used in teaching social and job skills
   b. especially useful in laboratory supplements

4. Programmed Instruction
   a. especially in subjects where students work at vastly different levels
   b. also information-intensive subjects which students approach with varying interests--e.g., life sciences, social studies

5. Information Resources
   a. computers as adjuncts to libraries

CAI programs can be bought in modules, as needed. A school that needs only the advanced calculus course for a handful of students does not need to buy a whole math education system.

Microcomputers make CAI practical by making it:

1. user-friendly

2. responsive
   a. giving immediate feedback
   b. easily modifiable for local needs

3. self-contained, autonomous in local schools

4. inexpensive

There have also been enormous improvements in software in recent years.

CAI could be a dream or a nightmare. For example:

1. We could replace teachers with computers, which would necessarily lead to:
   a. routinization
   b. dehumanization
   c. resistances

or,

2. We could use computers for routine work in order to free teachers for more creative, interactive, personal involvement with students.

Testing and Grading

Computers can readily increase the ease of testing and grading. They allow:

1. self-administered tests--with or without immediate feedback

2. automatic grading

3. ease of use of standardized materials--including special help for college-bound students who need SAT practice

But, there is an important difference between:

1. tests as aids to learning

and

2. tests as ends in themselves

Tests are often used simply to aid in standardization.

1. This replaces the goal of learning with the goal of evaluation

2. This leads to an emphasis on whatever is easy to test

Computers can also help teachers with:

1. keeping grade records

2. computing weighted scores

3. tracking individual student performance

Telematic Education

One of the most important advantages of microcomputers to rural schools is their ability to telecommunicate. This means:

1. Computerized resources from all over the country can be made available to any school, resources such as
   a. news media
   b. instructional software
   c. library resources
   d. data bases

2. Educational programs need not be tied so closely to school hours or facilities so that
   a. children with special needs--e.g., those kept home with longterm illnesses--can work from home
   b. adult and continuing education programs can be made more flexible
   c. in-service training for teachers can be provided at long distances from universities

Computer Familiarity

One final important reason for rural schools to use computers is simply to provide their students with basic computer familiarity. The computer is already an extremely important part of modern life. It is becoming more important:

1. for getting jobs

2. for doing college work

3. for politics

4. for the use of banking, stock exchange, and other financial services

5. for communication

6. for medicine, law, and a whole range of key social institutions

The individual who doesn't understand the computer will be left out of tomorrow's society. This sort of understanding and "high-tech" orientation has always been hard for rural students to get. It doesn't need to be hard anymore.

Computer, School, and Community

New computer technology offers opportunities for schools to extend their involvement to other institutions and residents in their local communities.

1. Schools can function as major avenues for the introduction of computer services into rural communities....
   a. through school-based development corporations
   b. through training of computer-literate citizens and workers
   c. by providing access to computers for local businesses, including farms
   d. by providing continuing education in computer literacy

2. Computers can facilitate community education efforts....
   a. by maintaining files indicating the range of skills members of local communities can offer to apprenticeship or lecture programs
   b. by linking local community people and organizations telematically into larger networks

3. Computers can help students to learn about their local community and it to learn about itself.
   a. they can be used to facilitate research
   b. they can be used to help keep, organize, and give access to community records

The social changes associated with the computerization of American society make community development even more important than before, and schools can play a central role.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Dr. Paul DeLargy
The University of Georgia

Introduction

I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about some basic things concerning volunteerism. Then, to help us--here's the good news--we'll call on two or three people in the audience who have been associated with excellent volunteer programs. These people are from Vidalia City Schools and the Brooks County Elderly Volunteer Program, both rural. And there are probably others among us we can call upon for help.

What I'd like to share with you takes up what some of the other folks have said before this session; that is, that the most important resources we have in any community are human beings, human resources. We talk a lot about money and what money will do, but usually the only thing money will do is help you convert it to something that's useful--and many times we convert that money to buying somebody's services. So if you have and use volunteers, you do away with the need for money and just try to get those services. It's as simple as that.

Ingredients for Success

1. Structure

I think the most important thing in volunteer programs is to have a very structured organization. Having structure will help the program succeed because when you have many people involved, they all need to know what their roles are; they need to know what their responsibilities are; and they need to know what their participation will mean to the organization and to themselves.

When we talk about a volunteer program for schools, we usually talk specifically about volunteers in the classroom. However, when we're talking

about community education, we're talking about volunteers for many more different activities. Even when we're dealing with regular school volunteers, we have more than just the volunteer and the teacher involved--either directly or indirectly, the administrators are involved, the students are involved, and the parents are involved. So when we organize a volunteer program, we have to take into consideration all the parties affected by that program. There has to be some overlap of needs.

I can describe with a story one of the problems that we have. Have you ever gone to the first PTA meeting of the year? Especially if there is a new principal, the folks will come. I remember being the new principal at an elementary school in Athens, Georgia. My first PTA meeting was the first time my school's parents were going to meet me. We had wall-to-wall people--they had just come to look at this new character who was going to try to be the principal of their school. We talked about the PTA; there was a lot of ambivalence and a lot of questioning about whether they would continue to have it. I think that the PTA can be a good organization. PTAs put out quite a bit of information; if we used their organization, we could do a lot with it. We could use it to develop a volunteer program and we wouldn't need a lot of additional organization. It represents a resource that is already there. Do you want to build on it? Or do you want to destroy it and build something else?

I kind of shocked the folks by saying, "I think if we're going to have a PTA, we'd better have the best damned PTA we can possibly have." In that provincial setting, that kind of language got their attention. But we did have the PTA and we used it. I said one of the things that the PTA could do is to be helpful in developing a volunteer program.

When the PTA meeting was over, a lady came up to me and said, "You know, I've heard that speech about 15 times. My husbands works at the

University and we've lived in many places and we've been to many different schools, and principals always say to us, 'We want you to come in and volunteer in our school.' And then we never hear another word."

If we really mean we want them to volunteer and we don't say to them anything more than "Come volunteer," it's like telling them, "Hey, here's a blank check. You sign it and give it to me and I'll do the best I can with it." People are not going to be that open-ended. So when we talk about volunteering, we've got to provide structure and say that we need some very specific things. And we need to work through the teachers and through the system to find out what those needs are. In community education, we take it a step further by going outside and doing other kinds of activities and using volunteers for purposes other than in the classroom or in directly related support systems for classrooms.

Well, to make a long story short, in that one school, we did have 116 volunteers. We had volunteers for 13 different types of activities. What we did--I think this is what's important--is we organized and we looked at what kinds of needs teachers had. And then we said to the teachers, "What kinds of volunteers do you need?" We said to the administration, to the other folks who were working in curriculum, and to support people such as the librarian, "What kinds of volunteers do you need?" We said, "Okay, let's spell things out very specifically." Then we developed volunteer job descriptions.

I want to take a few minutes to show you a slide presentation to informally present a way to structure a volunteer program. If you're going to have a good volunteer program, then you've got to work in the areas where individuals involved have "need overlap." In other words, you've got to meet the staff's or the teachers' needs; you've got to meet the needs of the volunteer; and then you've got to meet the needs of the clients or the students

(we say "clients" because in community education we may be using a volunteer for some process-oriented program).

2. Defining Specific Tasks

Let me give you a specific example of what I'm talking about. The teacher may need somebody to do a menial task, like emptying the waste basket or grading simple papers--tasks that don't take much knowledge, but do take a lot of time. Well, that's okay. That's taking care of the teacher's needs. But if the volunteer's needs are not met by doing that, then you've got a problem. That volunteer's not going to stay with you very long. If that volunteer is not challenged, then the volunteer's needs are not being fulfilled and that person will not volunteer again. Even if you're meeting the needs of both of these folks, the teacher and volunteer together, if you're not meeting the needs of the students, you still haven't accomplished anything. So we have to concentrate and look at how can we bring together the needs of all parties involved in a way allowing us to work with volunteers effectively. When all three individuals get together, we can meet all three overlapping needs. I think that's a very clear way of looking at it.

Making Teachers More Aware

I also think that we need to be very structured. Let me describe for you one approach we use when we go to schools. We always say to the teachers, "What's in it for you?" We usually talk to them in terms of, "Here are the pluses and here are the minuses." It's a threat to a lot of teachers to have volunteers in a room; it's also a threat to a lot of principals. They think that these folks come from the community and see all those "terrible" things that they're doing. Teachers sometimes forget that not only do <u>they</u> have bad days, but also the volunteers have bad days. But it doesn't take long to take care of that problem with a training program. We actually go through the process of developing job descriptions. I think what we need to

look at in terms of the relationship between school personnel and volunteers is that, when we ask a volunteer to do something, we should give them specific ways to operate. When I approach a school system to provide training, I say, "Here are some skills that I'll be glad to work with you to develop, but here are some things that have to happen before I can begin because otherwise I'll be wasting my time and your time--we know you're not going to have success unless certain events take place."

In a school system, are you going to go system-wide with a volunteer program, or are you going to go to one particular school? If you're going to go to one particular school, don't try to have volunteers without having the principal sold on the idea. Persuading the principal is a process that has to take place first.

Soliciting Teacher Commitment

The next thing that you need after having an "awareness session" is to have a commitment from at least four teachers. In order to have a successful volunteer program, you have to have an internal support structure, with one teacher supporting the other. If you take a school, even a small school of perhaps 10 teachers, and you have only one teacher who agrees to have volunteers, then she or he is out there all alone; this teacher is a "deviant" and is going to be pecked at. But if you get four (four's a kind of magic number for me), then you have an internal support system allowing one teacher to support another teacher; if there's a little bit of pecking going on, these teachers can support one another until things gets organized. You may think, "Well, that's not important." But it is important. If you isolate somebody doing something new, the chances of success are very, very slim.

Again, we need to have the principal's support, and we need to have at least four teachers who are willing to have volunteers. With this, we can take them through a training process. They won't need to decide whether to

commit themselves to a volunteer program until after we go through about a six-hour process generating the pluses and the minuses of volunteer programs and describing exactly what the benefits and the liabilities will be. And as I've mentioned, the biggest problem with volunteers is they're threatening to the teachers. Once you get the teachers over this feeling, once they've realized that those volunteers have bad days just like they do and that they are all human beings, it works out pretty well.

Then, only after the training process, it's decision time. Then we ask the teachers to ask themselves, "Okay, what's in it for me?" Most importantly, with these steps, they will see that having volunteers will be helpful to them in terms of being better teachers and being able to provide for the students better.

Involving the Community

But there's another asset involved, one that Jim Grant was talking about this morning: there's nothing better than getting the community involved in something to get them interested in the schools. And this relates directly to their needs. If they're really doing something they're interested in, then they're taking care of their needs, and they're going to be helpful to you in many other ways.

I don't know about other states, but in Georgia, every few years educators have to have some graduate credits to maintain their certification. We can say to teachers and educators, "Okay, here's what we'll do with you. We'll work out something with your school or your school system and we'll get you graduate credit. But we're going to do it by using the six-hour awareness process you've already participated in. Now that you've made this commitment, we're going to count those hours toward the graduate credit. So you already have six hours or eight hours of work towards whatever you needed to get those five credit hours, and we're going to use the rest of the

time in a very pragmatic way of handling the development of a volunteer program." And we take them through a developmental process. Sometimes it takes one quarter, sometimes two, sometimes we negotiate to do it in a year.

We did a summer workshop in one of the local counties represented here. They made the commitment, and we went through the fall and winter quarters before we trained their coordinators and placed them. We did it on a needs basis. We worked with the principals and with the volunteer coordinators separately; each school had its own volunteer coordinator. We trained them in skills on how to coordinate the volunteer program. In some schools, because the job required more time than one volunteer coordinator could donate, we had to have more than one coordinator. So we trained two or three to work as a team. But there are a lot of ways to do that--it can make a difference.

The Program Itself

The Planning Phase

We've been able to put in some very good volunteer programs, but I think the main thing to remember is we need adequate structure and we need to take those involved through a very systematic way of doing things. We first go through the planning phase. We just say, "Is there a need?"

Before we go on to the next thing--I've already mentioned this--you have to have administrative commitment. In other words, you must have your superintendent's support even if you're just going to go to one school in his or her system. To make sure that your superintendent feels comfortable about it, you may have to spend some time talking about the volunteer program with the superintendent or you may have him or her visit a school that will possibly have the program. So, sometimes it takes a week or so to get going; and sometimes it takes a year just doing these kinds of things to get

ready and to get folks involved in the program. We must get the administrative commitment.

The Action Phase

Then, of course, we look at the planning area. We go into an "action phase," which includes recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, and recognition. We go through these steps and come up with a design for the program. I usually have a checklist of goals; the goals of most volunteer programs are the same, or are close to being the same. Although what I'm describing to you is a very structured way, each individual school system comes up with a slightly different design to meet their individual needs for the volunteer program. Each one may have a little difference because of the particular flavor of their school or community, but we definitely try to go through these steps. We work toward having a consensus so that everyone knows where we are now and where we're trying to go. If you know where you are now and where you're trying to go, then you can probably figure out how to get there. Otherwise it's going to be very difficult.

Developing Job Descriptions

Then we develop job descriptions. We get all those people who are involved and willing to have volunteers and have them participate in developing job descriptions--and we don't reinvent the wheel. We supply an array of job descriptions, including those for school library volunteers. We have about 60 descriptions. Over the years, I've worked with schools that have developed very specific kinds of volunteer job descriptions, so we pass them out and say, "Here's a checklist. Do any of these meet your needs? Look at them and see if this one almost meets your needs. Just change it a little rather than develop a new one entirely because that would take a long time." And then we develop agreements for the teachers to approve, for the administration to approve, and for the volunteers to approve. Finally, the

students and parents give their approval. (The amount of student involvement depends on the age of the students.) We ask all concerned, "Are we going to have any problems with the agreement? Do you feel good about them or do we need to change them?"

Training Sessions

The next step is to train. That's where we have workshops working with volunteer coordinators. If you're from Florida and your school system wants a volunteer program, you have state money to provide leadership. The state of Florida has money for volunteer leadership in each school district. Other states as well have it, but we don't have it in Georgia.

Our planning would then direct us to recruitment, selections, placement of volunteers--we're talking about matching up people with jobs.

Let me give you an example of a community we worked with. This community had 17 schools, a lot of very small schools. After we had the little awareness session, we got 15 of the 17 principals to make a commitment. Then we asked them to bring the "lead teacher," somebody in the school with the authority to say "okay" and have it be "okay"; in other words, somebody who would add credibility as far as the other teachers were concerned. Then we asked the principals to pick somebody from their community who they thought would be a good coordinator; if that person couldn't be the coordinator, then he or she would understand and would be able to recruit a good coordinator, somebody who would coordinate the volunteer program in that particular school.

So that was our team and we recruited them. Then we brought those teams together and each team came up with a plan to implement a volunteer program. They decided to go county-wide and they made a big thing of it. They did all kinds of activities. They wrote the job descriptions and the

coordinators went out into the community and made people aware of the proposed program.

We couldn't believe what happened on recruitment day. We figured we'd get 150 volunteers in that rural community--350 showed up. We had more volunteers than we could handle at the beginning, but we were able to absorb them and get them working.

That's another thing: when somebody volunteers, you can't put them off. If someone volunteers, you want to get them involved as quickly as you can, like the next day, or even that same day, if possible, because the longer you wait, the less chance you have of keeping them.

That's a very negative thing. And that's what we do in education many times. People will offer their services; we hear them, but we never get around to them. Maybe a month later we do get back to them, but by then they've kind of lost their interest. I know as a principal that what that lady was telling me is true. I've been to meetings myself where I'd say, "Hey, we want a volunteer." And people would come up to me after the meeting and say, "I'd like to help you. What can I do? This school needs some help. We'd like to help." Then I'd never do any more about it. There's a relationship between the time when somebody offers and when you put them to work. It's not good to make that time lag very long.

The Recruitment

There are all kinds of ways to recruit. The people in this community did some interesting things. For example, they developed a logo. We're always trying to get communities to develop a logo, to have some way of identifying themselves. We had the VEEPS Program in one school system, the STARR (Spend Time and Reap Rewards) Program in another school. In Brooks County, they have a program for the elderly called "Friends in School." People like to have some means of identification, so you try to get

them a logo or a name that they can identify with. It can be the school name or slogan with a volunteer attachment to it, or it can be something signaling a relationship between the volunteer program and the regular school logo.

To advertise, these particular rural citizens went to the grocery store and asked to have things put on the grocery bags. I've seen all kinds of techniques--regular kinds of presentations as well as some unusual kinds of techniques. One community displayed banners. You could not get into or out of that town without knowing that recruitment day was November 6, which happened to be in the same week that Georgia had its statewide Volunteer Day.

There are a lot of other ways to make people aware so that you can recruit them. The main thing is to recruit for very specific volunteer jobs; for example, recruit someone to work two hours in the library doing specific tasks. Many times, you'll show what kinds of volunteer needs you have and somebody will come in and say, "Well, I'd like to do that but I don't know exactly how." You can offer training, but most people won't need to do that. They'll come in and say, "I can already do this. I can do that." So you put them to work doing what they can do.

You must consider a way to reward volunteers by giving them something that is more difficult or challenging. If they don't have the ability to do it, then offer training. This will upgrade your volunteer program. You can measure a good volunteer program by noting how many people start out, how many people you keep, and also the number of hours they spend. If they come in for two hours and wind up spending 15, that's a pretty good indication you're doing well and a good measure of evaluating where you are.

The Selection

We would train the coordinators with skills so that they could successfully match the volunteers and teachers. My point is that you ought to have

some process by which you try to match up people as best you can.

The Orientation

I think that orientation is real important. There's no difference, by the way, in the orientation process for volunteers and what you do for regular employees. I mean, volunteers are more valuable than regular employees in many ways because you aren't paying them. You've got to reward volunteers in some way, and one of the ways you reward them is by orienting them and making them feel good about what they're doing. A good personnel practice would be to do the very same things for your employees, so there's really no difference. You do the same things.

Volunteers should be treated as well as or better than your employees because they're not getting paid. They are volunteering and they have to have some reward for their efforts. Many times they are considered second-class citizens. If principals really want to squelch a deal, if they really don't want volunteers, they can make the people feel uncomfortable in the school if they want to. They can also make them feel very comfortable. That's why I say the principal is the key. The teachers and the volunteers can have a good relationship, and the principal can goof it up or can make it very successful. The orientation is very important.

For example, one school had 116 volunteers and had to have a way to orient the volunteers as to what the rules were, where things were located in the building. We even had to orient them in terms of what doors to come in and what doors to leave by because, with that many volunteers, we needed to have control. We had to know who was there because lots of times we had phone calls for them or emergencies arose.

In terms of recognition, you need some way to keep account of what volunteers do so they can be recognized. Many volunteers say, "Don't bother, don't worry about it," but that's not really the case. The odds are that, if you recognize somebody's contributions, then that person is going to appreciate it even though they may not say so. You need to develop some means of recognition. There are many different things you can do. I think one of the best ways is to get the community involved and see if they'll support some sort of reward of a certain volunteer period. In this particular county that had the 17 schools, several organizations got together and gave beautiful hanging plants to each volunteer. We're talking about a $6 - $10 kind of thing--they had 300 of these plants at the recognition banquet held at the end of the year in the gymnasium. Can you imagine 300 of those big hanging plants?--they took up quite a bit of room. It was a nice display, and it vividly demonstrated a reward system. The volunteers appreciated it.

If you can keep track of the time volunteers spend and set up some sort of a reward system, I think they would be pleasantly surprised at the end of the year. It's a way to tell them you appreciate them, you understand what they're doing, and you're keeping track of it, not as a way of control, but just as a way to have some rewards and to have a way to communicate with them.

Finally, let's consider reasons for volunteering. I think you've got to think about why people volunteer. They volunteer because they have a desire to become responsibly involved in the real problems of society and their community. They believe that their efforts are good and will do some good, whatever the activities are. To share goals on an effort, to have a desire to help ourselves and the members of our family, to want to help a friend who's already involved--all of these are reasons to volunteer.

That's how you recruit. That's the best recruiting, by just getting one volunteer who's really happy to go out and say how rewarding volunteer work is. This volunteer will help you recruit.

The desire or need for social contact; availability for more leisure time; an opportunity to satisfy deeper needs than the more automated jobs are satisfying; the obligation or desire to share specialized knowledge; a basic need to help others; and a need to be needed--all of these, too, are reasons to volunteer.

I'll end with just one more story. In the last school where I was principal, we had the equivalent of seven full-time people volunteering. We had some real problem kids that we'd isolated and we had 15 volunteers working with them. These kids were real problems, unbelievable problems. We had taken them to the psychiatric clinic, but the clinic couldn't take them, and they suggested we get the kids out of school. Instead, we got volunteers to work with them. The tradeoff for the volunteers was that if they would come help us with these kids, then these kids wouldn't be interfering with the educational process that was going on in the school. So we'd take these kids down to the fire station and all over. They'd have breakfast and lunch at school, and then those volunteers would take care of these students the rest of the day. Within a year, we had integrated them back into the schools and they were operating okay. When the volunteers were working with these special students, a lot of times the other students would complain, saying, "Hey, how come they get all this special attention?" And we'd say, "Join the group." But we never had a kid join the group. They could have if they'd wanted to, but they understood. Kids understand.

I left that school, but two years later, when we visited the town, a principal called me. He wanted me to see Charlie, one of the kids everybody had given up on. Charlie was doing just fine. If it hadn't been for those

volunteers, there's no way that those 15 kids could have made it. The interesting thing was when we were trying to integrate the kids back into the regular classes, we told the volunteers, "We've got to keep you away from these students the last couple of weeks. We want them to be regular students."

The point is that those parents who had worked with the problem kids could not stay away. They did come back and it was a great occasion. It was really rewarding. You have to remember my name is DeLargy and I'm French and I'm allowed to cry and be sensitive; a lot of men aren't, but I am. These women volunteers came in and said, "We want to thank you." I said, "Why do you want to thank me?" And they said, "You really helped us." Two others of them said, "You know, we were close to becoming alcoholics. We were sitting at home drinking until we got so involved in this program." They were crying and I was crying. You know, that's the real reward, isn't it? That was a payoff that I never had thought about--the payoff is to the volunteers, too. It has to be or they wouldn't continue to be volunteers.

By the way, of all the volunteer programs I've had the pleasure to be involved with, either as a principal or consultant, all but one were located in rural or small schools. In rural communities, some of the planning steps are more difficult to accomplish, but there is such a prevailing sense of community that it helps overcome lack of density, transportation problems, and low incomes.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FUTURE OF RURAL EDUCATION

Dr. Dale Lick
Georgia Southern College

An Overview

Before beginning my specific remarks, I would like to share some thoughts as an overview, looking today toward the future of rural education. We are entering one of the most exciting eras ever in education. A vital part of the opportunity for educators lies in rural education. Rural education is a noble cause. Although our institutions may not be Harvards, the concerns and consequences affecting the people, small towns, and rural communities we serve are just as important as what goes on at Harvard. I believe that rural education is one of the greatest challenges of our time. As I discuss the future of rural education today, I hope you will get a sense of why I feel that way.

To modify someone else's saying, "I have seen the future for rural education and it works." You have heard many examples yesterday and today that prove rural education is important and that it does work.

Let's take a snapshot of this moment in America, and then examine from several points of view what we find. We might ask: What are some of the existing aspects of this moment that are relevant and important to rural America and rural education? What are some of the general factors and trends affecting rural education? From these considerations, we can explore the future of rural education and make some general recommendations for moving rural education forward.

One of the things we know best about the future is that we don't now have all the answers to its questions. This is particularly true about rural education. We do have some answers, however, and do have the capability to determine what it will take to advance rural education. That's really what we

are about today. Instead of throwing up our hands and saying, "Hey, we can't handle it," we need to remind ourselves that "It's a poor craftsman who blames his tools when something goes wrong." Unfortunately, we too often have a tendency to look to all the things around us for the reasons--or excuses--that we don't get the job done. On the contrary, we can get the job done! It's a big job, it's an important job, but we can get it done if we're willing to devote the time, the energy, and the resources to making it happen. I hope we are willing.

Each of you here today is a key in that happening. You are here because you represent the leadership of rural education. So together let's consider some of the many factors affecting rural education.

Prevailing Aspects

What are some of the aspects of rural America and rural education that we must deal with today? First, we must recognize the "image problem." In many people's minds, "rural" too often connotes a lack of ability, a lack of culture, or a lack of other kinds of qualities rather than a viable alternative to an urban setting. That connotation is unfortunate and it must be countered with fact.

In addition, rural America is very heterogeneous. Rural people, rural communities, and rural conditions are enormously diverse, and, as a result, we have a complexity of public policies, leading to a complexity of programs that affect those policies.

The term rural also implies small communities and low population densities. This means greater isolation and greater difficulty in delivering services, whether they're health services, educational services, or regional development. Rural schools characteristically have higher attrition rates and lower achievement levels than their urban counterparts; these are facts of rural life. Rural development is inhibited by limited support services, limited

levels of available general and professional expertise, and limited role models and exposures for young people.

However, on the plus side, rural America enjoys a richer and more deeply rooted cultural heritage and stability than the transient urban centers. Rural Americans are characteristically sensitive, responsible, and caring, and are among the finest people anywhere. Rural America has a tremendous number of positive qualities, and may, in fact, be the best place to live and to raise a family, even with some of its shortcomings.

One of the greatest negative impacts on the rural scene is imposed by a policy of our own making, what I call the "urbanization of rural systems." For example, in education, urban approaches are forced on curriculum, on teacher education, on structure, giving rise to policies and methods that are not directed towards creating better rural schools and systems, but instead are aimed at creating wholesale urbanization of most aspects of rural society. Approaches to problems in rural areas are too often urban approaches to rural problems. And too often they fail!

This is symptomatic of a lack of priority that has resulted in inadequate amounts of time, attention, and resources being devoted to rural education. Existing strategies, whether conscious or unconscious, have served primarily to ensure that existing deficiencies in rural education continued unabated.

One of the major problems is that valid research is sorely lacking in nearly every phase of rural education.

Trends

Let's now move on to some of the present trends which will significantly affect rural education. The first five of these trends are outlined in a paper entitled "The New Economics and Political Order of the 1980s" by John Naisbitt. However, I think they are directly applicable to our discussion, because they describe the complexities of the future with which we must deal.

1. The United States is rapidly shifting from a mass industrial society to an information society, and the final impact will be more profound than the 19th-century shift from an agricultural to an industrial society. Information occupations are those involved in the creating, processing, and distribution of information by groups such as banks, stock markets, insurance companies, education, and government.

   Labor Force (percentages):

	1900	1950	1980
Industrial Sector	35	65	35
Information Sector	low	17	55

2. There is more decentralization than centralization taking place in America--for the first time in the nation's history. The power is shifting not only from the President to Congress, but also from Washington to the states and localities.

3. We are now a truly global economy because of instantaneously shared information, and the world is deeply in the process of redistribution of labor and production.

4. The American society is moving in dual directions of high technology/high touch. The introduction of all new technology is accompanied by a compensatory human response, i.e., personalizing and humanizing, or the new technology is rejected. For example, new technology life-support systems have given rise to concern over "death with dignity."

5. There are the beginnings of a job revolution in America, a basic restructuring of the work environment from top-down and from bottom-up. A whole new attitude toward American workers is on the way. And it should result in a revitalization of the spirit of work and America's productivity.

6. Demographic changes in America from 1970 to 1980 include:
   - Population growth by 23 million, an 11.4 percent increase.
   - Age-structure shift: Those under 14 decreased by 7 million (12 percent); those 25 to 34 increased by 12 million (49 percent); and those 65 and older increased 28 percent.
   - Regional population shifts: Northeast to South (20 percent increase) and West (24 percent increase), well above national average.
   - City growth slowed from 17 percent in the '60s to only 9 percent in the '70s.
   - Migration was from cities to rural and suburban areas (e.g., New York City lost one million).

   Effects of these changes will include:
   - Age-structure shifts affecting most social and economic conditions.
   - Senior citizens commanding increasing political, economic, social, and cultural attention.
   - The Southeast and Southwest attracting business and industry and spawning new industries.
   - Political power shifting from traditional centers in the Northeast (e.g., four of the last five presidents were from the South or West; additionally, there is a redistribution of congressional seats, with 17 moving to the South and West).

- Migration to the countryside, but not back to the farm. New residents of rural areas will drastically alter leadership and community patterns, including social, economic, political, and religious aspects of the area.

7. A greater interdependence is developing between the urban and rural sectors of society.

8. Schools and institutions of higher education are becoming more responsible and more responsive to the people they serve.

9. More than ever, the psychology of the American people is keyed to playing fair and providing reasonably equitable treatment for all.

10. Rural America is becoming a complex mix of characteristics, simultaneously encompassing the full spectrum from those of the past to those of the modern technology.

The Future

Keeping in mind the importance of rural education, the prevailing forces and trends affecting it, and the necessity for change, let's now explore some of the vital aspects for the future of rural education.

1. The prospects for real progress for rural America and rural education are excellent. Although financial, philosophical, environmental, and other inhibiting constraints will continue, efforts that are innovative, relevant, and forthright have potential for significant influence.

2. In their efforts to be more responsive to the society they serve and to strengthen their relative position during difficult and competitive times, educational institutions will more establish a rural thrust and develop

programs and activities directly applicable to the needs and concerns of rural America.

3. Rural education will experience greater change during the next decade than in any previous comparable period. The '80s will be a meaningful "Decade of Transition" for rural education.

4. Major items broadly affecting rural education in the future will include:
   - Expanded use of modern technology (e.g., telecommunications, computers, robotics, fiber optics, and lasers).
   - Increased priority among governmental, educational, and civic organizations for dealing with the problems and potentials of rural areas.
   - Enhanced cooperative efforts among different groups, both rural and urban, for more effective synergic approaches and better utilization of existing resources.
   - More specific and relevant attention paid to curriculum, structure, and financial reforms in and for rural education systems.
   - Significant augmentation of the efforts of traditional organizations by grassroot and special rural interest groups.
   - Heightened appreciation of the critical role of rural America in all aspects of a modern society and in an interdependent world.

Recommendations:

Among the most important recommendations we might make for rural education for the future are the following:

1. Establish a national "rural policy" reflecting the importance of rural America and rural education and raising the consciousness level for and priority of these areas.

Such a policy should recognize the critical needs and concerns of rural America and rural education and should create strategies for dealing with these problems in order to make this rural component an even more important part of society.

In particular, leadership for creating this new level of awareness and related strategies of action should come collectively and cooperatively, at national, state, and local levels (e.g., U.S. Departments of Education and Agriculture, State Education Departments, and other appropriate agencies and organizations, and our institutions of higher education and schools).

2. Develop a national "rural data base" for the various quality-of-life aspects of society. To be really meaningful, such a data base will have to be structured to allow for the collection and analysis of data for the entire rural sector, as well as for the numerous rural subregions around the country.

   Until the proper data is collected and analyzed, it will be hard to gain the appropriate priority and responsiveness for rural problems and rural education. In fact, such a data base will not only better define the problems to be addressed, but will also help set goals to solve these problems.

3. Give renewed emphasis to research, relating to the concerns and potentialities of rural America and rural education.

   For all practical purposes, little research that deals with the rural sector has been completed. Such research has great potential for solving or reducing in severity long-standing rural problems, and for

helping rural America and rural education become even more significant elements in society.

4. Create programs and train professionals specifically for the needs of rural America and rural education.

   Over the years, there has been an urbanization of most aspects of rural systems. Too often, we have used urban approaches, urban-trained personnel, and urban reforms to solve rural problems. Recognizing the shortcomings and failings of such approaches, we need to establish "rural" programs and prepare "rural" professionals to deal creatively with rural problems.

5. Set goals for strengthening rural America and rural education based on rural needs and desired rural outcomes, as opposed to adopting urban goals from related urban problems.

   For example, a goal of rural health should be quality health care. Too often, this gets urbanized and becomes instead a matter of having enough doctors for a given population. For a rural setting, quality health care may have only a limited dependence on the number of available doctors. Using some new approaches, such as nurse practitioners and home health care programs, may be far more effective and efficient.

6. Acknowledge the leadership void in the rural sector and for rural education, and develop mechanisms at national, state, and local levels to correct this deficiency.

   Little real "rural leadership" exists across the country. Few of our governmental agencies, institutions of higher education, or private

organizations--even those in rural areas--have stepped forward with specifically rural programs and leadership. At best, such leadership has been sparse, sporadic, and limited in impact. Now is the time for governmental, education, and private groups to begin to meet this challenge as part of their overall responsibility.

7. Create a national central office for the collection and dissemination of promising practices, statistical data, and other appropriate information relating to rural America and rural education, as well as for the sharing of services and resources among appropriate agencies and organizations.

8. Encourage and enlist the professional leadership and technical assistance of greater numbers of institutions of higher education and other appropriate agencies toward dealing with rural initiatives in a more holistic fashion, and provide the philosophical, moral, and financial support required to reach agreed upon, desired outcomes.

Summary

In summary, please consider the following thoughts and ideas relating to rural education:

1. Rural America and rural education encompass about one-third of the population and one-third of the educational activities in this country. Those figures represent a pretty significant minority, and an important part of our total society. It has not received comparable resources, attention, and concern. Now is the time for rural education to move forward!

2. Many believe that rural America remains America's future.

3. Let each of us return to our institutions or agencies remembering what Alexander Graham Bell said about opportunities: "As one door of opportunity closes, others open." We must continue to look for "doors of opportunity" for rural education.

4. As Norman Cousins writes in the chapter called "Survival as an Option" in his book Human Options:

> The human species is unique because it alone can create, recognize, and exercise options. This means that it can do things for the first time. We can reasonably argue, therefore, that human beings are equal to their needs, that a problem can be resolved if it can be perceived, that progress is what is left after the seemingly impossible has been retired, and that the crisis today in human affairs is represented not by the absence of human capacity, but by the failure to recognize that the capacity exists.

Finally, let me leave you with one of my favorite prayers, by Phillip Brooks:

Do not pray for easy lives
pray to be stronger men!
Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers,
pray for powers equal to your tasks.
Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle,
but you shall be a miracle.
Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness
of life which has come to you by the grace of God.

COLORADO EXPERIMENT: FOUR-DAY SCHEDULE

Roy G. Brubacher
Colorado Department of Education

Introduction

How many of you are administrators? Supervisors? May I see a show of hands? Good! Do any of you have someone working for you whom you dislike intensely? How many have experienced that situation? I have an individual working for me who doesn't particularly like me and I know darned well that I don't like him. He's always on the borderline. On the plane yesterday, I finally figured out what I'm going to do. When I get back to Denver, I'm going to give him a raise because when I fire him, I want to make sure he loses a good job.

I'm here to talk about something that's been going on in our state for approximately three years. We originated a program in Colorado called the Alternative School Calendar. Probably 85 percent of the school districts that are involved in the program are experimenting with the four-day school week. In 1979, our general assembly passed legislation allowing the State Board of Education and the Department of Education in Colorado to develop rules and regulations that would govern school districts wishing to involve themselves in developing an alternative school calendar.

This was not a new idea in the state of Colorado by any means. In 1972, we adopted similar legislation that allowed school districts to develop year-round programs. A number of our rapidly growing school districts at that time involved themselves in developing and implementing year-round calendars. The precedent that was set at that time was to allow a school district to enter into an alternative calendar program on a one-year application basis, which was renewable for three years by the State Board of Education upon application. Once the school district received approval for the

fourth year, the program was removed from pilot status and became a permanent operation, no longer as closely monitored by the state.

In 1980, the Colorado General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 78, providing local school boards the authority to further modify their school calendar. This permissive legislation allows the local district, upon application to and approval by the State Board of Education, to hold less than the 180-day schedule required by law, provided the classroom instruction hours of the 180-day schedule are maintained. Our public school Finance Act requires the boards of education to schedule 180 days of school, and each day to provide six hours of instruction, excluding lunch. Our new act, then, simply says a school district may develop an alternative school calendar as long as 1,080 hours of instruction are provided.

Characteristics of Colorado

Allow me to talk a little bit about our state. Our state is interesting because it really has three areas--three populations, so to speak. The state is divided by the Continental Divide so we have many small, mountainous, rural-type school districts. There are mining towns, tourist towns, ski resort towns, and so on. The people who live in the mountainous areas of the state of Colorado are very progressive, very independent. They'll try anything. Along the base of the mountains on the east side is a vast sprawling metropolitan area. The area of Denver and surrounding suburbs south to the city of Pueblo and north to the city of Fort Collins is very much a cosmopolitan, urban-type area. Then, as you move east out onto the drylands plains area, you find the dryland farmer and a very conservative population.

So we really have three different populations to work with. On the east side of the state, we find that our school districts are experiencing declining enrollments. In the metropolitan area, the school enrollments are fairly stable, partly because people are moving into the state and partly because

our birth rate has increased very rapidly over the past five years. On the west side of the state, we're experiencing some boom-towns. Undoubtedly, you have read something about the oil shale phenomenon that's taking place in our state.

You may have heard about the town of Parachute, Colorado. A year ago September, the school boasted of 194 students in 12 grades, K-12. As of last week, they passed the 700 mark. Their growth is fairly rapid. Please keep in mind that, in our mountain communities, many of our students are transported on a daily basis over high mountain passes, over ice, snow, and very hazardous conditions. We have one district in the state where an elementary school is 95 miles from the superintendent's office. We have another situation in the state where a school district is operating only eight grades, but the district is transporting youngsters 65 miles one way to high school. If you travel from my office in Denver to the southwest corner of the state to a school district headquartered in Cortez, Colorado, the driving time is ten and a half hours, and the flying time is about an hour and forty-five minutes in the state's plane.

This gives you some idea of the kinds of people who live in Colorado and some of the problems they're facing at the present time. Distance and high energy costs are the reasons that they are interested in different kinds of calendars and schedules.

Leadville, Colorado, sits at an elevation of 10,800 feet; each time it snows, it costs from $500 to $600 per building just to clear the school playground of snow and then an additional $500 to shovel the snow off the roof. They're thinking very seriously of closing school in the months of December, January, and February. Under our legislation, they could very well develop a calendar that would allow them to go to school in August through November and then start again in March and continue through June.

The Alternative Calendar

One of the things that encouraged the legislature of our state to adopt Senate Bill 78 was the energy crunch as well as the spiraling costs of utilities. We're predicting that, within five years, those same costs will triple. Hopefully, the alternative calendar can help schools conserve energy. This will not reduce costs but may at least slow down the acceleration of the costs to school districts.

The act that was passed set forth minimum requirements. It simply says that, during the three-year pilot program, a school district is required to report the program's effect on student achievement; to report its effect on transportation and facility utilization; to provide cost comparisons for every base year's expenditure (the base year being the year prior to implementing the alternative calendar); to report staff, parent, and student reactions; and to provide other supportive evidence that the district's education opportunities and services are comparable to the 180-day schedule.

During the first year, 13 Colorado school districts applied to enter into an alternative school calendar. Keep in mind that all districts must provide the 1,080-hour schedule, so that means an extended day for four days a week. In the first year, most of the districts developed a 7½-hour-a-day instructional program that allowed them to reduce their calendars to 144 days. Of the 13 that were involved in the program the first year, 12 continued for the second year and 10 more requested it the following year.

As I said, the alternative school calendar is not a new idea. The four-day week was tried in the New England states prior to 1975. Cimmaron, New Mexico, is now in its eleventh year of a four-day school week. One of the things we did in the beginning was to visit Cimmaron with people from two of our districts that were interested in establishing an alternative schedule. The superintendents and members of the boards of education

talked to parents, students, and others that were involved in the Cimmaron program. Cimmaron is cattle country, Zane Gray-type country. As we left the community, we stopped at a local filling station to refuel our automobiles. Pumping the gas was an old gentleman who had punched cows in that country for years and who had to have been in his seventies. I'm sure he was pumping gasoline now because he could no longer straddle a horse. One of the fellows with us said to him, "What do you think of this four-day school week?" And he said, "Boy, I think it's great. On the fifth day, the kids are out there learning something."

We contracted with Colorado State University and Dr. Robert Richburg from the Office of Rural Education to look at ten of our school districts after completing the first year of the four-day week. We hope to do a third-year study and try to look at what happens to school districts that have been involved in the program three years, two years, and one year. We also hope to look at school districts that have developed programs in other states. Minnesota has 17 school districts in the program this year. There is one in Wyoming. There are four in Utah, nine in New Mexico, two in Oregon, two in California. There are one or two in New Hampshire. Two community colleges in Pennsylvania have adopted a four-day school week. We receive in our office approximately four inquiries a week for information. We have received inquiries from schools in Australia and England that are very interested in the program.

After the First Year of Operation

Let me go through some of the things that we found at the end of the first year.

1. The concept of extending the school day for four days instead of holding classes five days is an innovative alternative to the conventional school

week. Though the 12 districts involved in this study implemented the four-day schedule with many variations and with differing objectives, all districts demonstrated the potential of the schedule to save energy and transportation costs, and to reduce student and teacher absenteeism.

2. Achievement levels for students on the four-day week are comparable to the same students' achievement prior to experiencing the four-day week.

3. Parents, teachers, and students all favor the four-day week concept over the five-day week by a wide margin. Ninety-one percent of the 767 parents surveyed support the four-day week. Likewise, 94.7 percent of the 205 teachers and 93.2 percent of the 1,474 students surveyed indicated a preference for the alternative schedule. This broad support suggests that the four-day schedule offers more than an opportunity to cut budget costs. Many of those surveyed prefer the alternative schedule because of the personal and professional opportunities presented by the three-day weekend, and also because of its instructional advantages. Secondary teachers believe the longer class periods provide greater instructional flexibility and efficiency. Elementary teachers also favor the four-day schedule by a wide margin. They often comment that the days are long for young children, but they also cite many instructional advantages that can be achieved with careful and creative planning.

4. There are important strategic considerations surrounding the decision whether to take Monday or Friday off on the four-day schedule. Taking Monday off will improve energy savings. Taking Friday off reduces energy savings as compared to Monday, but enables a district to

schedule out-of-class activities to avoid interference with academic time. By using Fridays for sporting events and other out-of-class activities, one district calculated a savings in academic time that approached one week per student in its high school.

5. The school districts in this study achieved notable cost savings in many areas. Gasoline consumption for buses and other school vehicles was reduced by 22.5 percent. Bus maintenance costs were reduced by 18 percent. Electrical consumption was reduced by 23 percent. After adjustments were made for the unusually warm 1980-81 winter in Colorado, these districts showed savings in heating fuel consumption ranging from 7 percent to 25 percent. Savings were also realized in substitute teachers' costs, since these districts utilized an average of 24.5 fewer substitute days under the four-day schedule.

Designing Individualized Calendars

Local school districts may design their own individualized formats for the collection of information, but the minimum data must be supplied in a formal report to the Commissioner of Education no later than thirty days following the end of the school year.

The possibilities the four-day week phase of the alternative school calendar may offer for educational innovations are limited only by the imagination and creativity of a local community and its school system.

Examples of such possibilities, other than energy conservation, are:

1. The enhancement of work/study programs
2. The advancement of professional and staff development programs
3. The improvement of curriculum planning
4. Better evaluation of student achievement

5. A provision for increased time in vocational education, career opportunities, and on-the-job training on the nonschool day.

The four-day week concept may not be appropriate for all school districts, but for many districts it can provide a schedule accommodating many new community and student opportunities.

After the Second Year of Operation

After two years of observing and studying the operations and reports of the school districts involved with a four-day week alternative calendar, we have concluded:

1. The longer teacher/student daily contact time is positively related to improved student achievement. Student and teacher absenteeism is reduced. Additional time is provided for family activities, work, leisure time, personal business, and participation in other community organizations. The opportunity for a school system to improve its curriculum through flexible scheduling techniques is present.

2. The evaluation information supports the conclusion that a four-day week schedule does, in fact, reduce energy consumption and general operations costs.

3. Negative factors must also be carefully examined. Some of the school district's energy costs are diverted to the family's expense. There are some pupils who will have excess free time to spend around town. The school day is longer for young children, and some will arrive home later in the afternoon. Working parents may be faced with additional costs and unstructured time for their children.

4. A community and school district should avoid moving into a four-day week schedule without first conducting careful studies and planning. Upon completion of a pre-planning study, the advantages should be weighed against the disadvantages. A decision should be made only after careful study.

5. The four-day week pilot program in Colorado has been limited to small rural school districts. There is no data indicating implications the schedule may have for urban or suburban school districts.

6. Only time, continued comprehensive evaluation, and a monitoring of community attitudes will determine if the four-day week schedule affords a better alternative than the traditional five-day week.

Questions and Answers

Question: What are the usual hours of an extended day?

Answer: About seven-and-a-half hours.

Question: When do they begin and end?

Answer: Most schools begin before eight o'clock in the morning, between 7:30 and 8:00, and dismiss classes at 4:00 or 4:15. Remember, they must provide the 1,080 hours exclusive of the lunch hour in an effort to keep the length of the day as short as possible.

Question: How do the schools handle hourly-wage staff?

Answer: We found that a number of school districts decided to keep their bus mechanics on a five-day schedule rather than a four-day schedule. They found the maintenance of their equipment was

greatly improved because the mechanics had the opportunity to work on the buses during the "down" days. They could undertake larger repair jobs than they could under normal circumstances.

Most of them also kept their custodial staff, or at least their maintenance staff, five days a week. They also found that, over a period of time, they almost eliminated their summer maintenance program. The maintenance people were able to make repairs during the school year; they could do some of the things on that day when the kids were not in school that they could not ordinarily do with the children in class or in the building. So, many of them indicated some savings in their summer maintenance program through this process.

One problem they encountered was that their bus drivers were reduced from five to four days. That created a salary problem because they were reducing the number of days that drivers were driving or the number of collective hours they were driving, and, therefore, reducing the salary. Many of the school districts felt that they were underpaying their bus drivers, so they struck a deal with most of them, saying, "We'll pay you the five days' wages and you'll work four." In effect, they were upgrading the salary for their drivers.

Cooks were also a problem because they, too, were working four days and not five. In some cases, the district, after reducing their week to four days, simply paid on the basis of four days a week. In other cases, they did slightly increase their salaries, so the cost savings in this case was not a great amount.

Some cost savings were generated that had not been anticipated when the schedule was reduced from 180 days to 144 days: students and staff used a lot less toilet tissue, paper towels, soap, custodial supplies, wax, cleansers, and other supplies.

Implementing the Alternative Calendar

When the Senate passed the act giving the school boards authority to modify their school calendar, we were concerned about the requirement that the State Board of Education adopt the rules and regulations for administering the act. Our state's board has the authority to promulgate rules for legislative acts. Our board rules and regulations simply require that, 60 days prior to the implementation of the program, the school district must file an application with the State Board of Education. They must list their goals and objectives. They must have some plan for evaluating the program. They must be able to compare opportunities and services that are being provided to youngsters with the five-day schedule. And they must certify that at least 1,080 hours of instruction are being provided.

The State Board may approve the programs for one, two, or three years. There must be an annual review during the pilot years of the program and a report back to the board. This responsibility belongs primarily to my staff. They must first visit all the school districts each year to determine if they are evaluating the program, and then they report back to the board. After three years of successful operation, a program is no longer considered a pilot program; it then has permanent status.

The second responsibility of my staff is to look at the application. On the second page of the application, it says, "Submit to Roy Brubacher." Well, I knew that was going to happen. I'm a slow reader, so I tried to keep the application as simple as possible. On the first page of the application, we ask the school district to list the major goal of the pilot program. I have

deliberately provided a small space for them to write their major goal. And again, for the major objectives of the pilot program, I've provided a small space so that I don't have a long list of those things to review. And as for comparative information, I have three yes-or-no questions. I ask them to attach a calendar which verifies the hours and the days. The last thing is to affix the school board president's signature. That is our total application process. Again, we try to keep it as simple as possible for school districts to become involved if they so desire.

One of the things we did the first year was to bring together the superintendents that were involved in the program. The superintendents developed a set of questionnaires that could be utilized by districts that were completing the first year and considering becoming involved in the program the second year. We developed a parent "opinionnaire" that was rather simple and short. We also developed a similar "opinionnaire" for students, teachers, and nonclassified staff.

What we're recommending now for school districts that are contemplating entering into the program is to try the program during the last month of the school year, then go to the community, the students, the staff, the classified staff, and circulate these questionnaires to determine their response to the one month of operation. We're also saying that, unless you have 80 percent of your community, staff, and students with you, stay out of the program. Don't split your community over something of this nature.

ROLE OF FOUNDATIONS

Rebecca Hutton
Mott Foundation, Inc.

Introduction

The elusive, but often pursued, beast of the great American grantsman is the foundation. This is true today more than ever before. A short history of foundations will explain how they developed to this popularity.

Foundations as we know them go back to 1867, when Georgia Peabody established the Peabody Education Fund, which is usually regarded as the first modern grant-making foundation. The Peabody Education Fund was directed to use its assets of approximately $2 million for postwar school rehabilitation and development projects in the defeated states of the Confederacy.

Two landmark events in the history of foundations were the founding of the Carnegie Corporation by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 and the chartering of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1913 by John D. Rockefeller, Sr. These two were the first general purpose and professionally managed foundations established in the United States. They operated, nationally and internationally, on a scale never approached before by any American philanthropic agency.

Since World War I, and particularly since 1940, private and family foundations have been created by the thousands. At least 25,000 legal entities called foundations, chartered by state governments, had been established by the 1960s. Because of increased federal government control over foundations in the Tax Reform Act of 1969, a considerable number of small colleges, churches, and other nonprofit charitable organizations merged with other foundations.

Today, according to the best available estimates, there are about 22,500 foundations. Most of them have assets of less than a quarter of a million

dollars. Ninety-three percent of all foundation assets are located in 15 percent of the foundations. This is a critical point to keep in mind if you're trying to get a profile of funding possibilities from foundations.

With the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, foundations were given a better opportunity to yield from their investments. Prior to the act, government regulations required foundations to give away either five percent of their assets or the foundation's invested income, whatever was larger. The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 allowed foundations to give away only a straight five percent of their assets, regardless of their investment income. For the larger foundations, this was a recovery of two to three percent. While foundations can choose to give away more than the required five percent, few have done so.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has long been interested and involved in community self-improvement. Since its founding in 1926 as a private, non-operating foundation, it has funded programs aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals and their communities. In its early years, the Foundation primarily expended its resources in Flint, Michigan, but we now support programs across the United States and have some limited involvement internationally.

The Mott Foundation's approach to grant making is guided by a series of principles and mission statements which are detailed in our management/philosophy statement entitled "Foundation for Living." We are primarily interested in making grants that support demonstration, action-oriented programs. We are particularly interested in unique approaches to solving community problems--approaches that, if proven successful, can be disseminated to or applied in other communities. Whenever possible, grants calling for seed money as opposed to general support are preferred.

We do not, as a general rule, support capital development, endowment, or pure research projects. We also do not, as a general rule, fund local school districts. However, these types of grants may be considered when they are necessary to carry out or advance existing program objectives.

Community Education and the Mott Foundation

Charles Stewart Mott, a pioneer of the automobile industry, established the Foundation out of a sense of responsibility toward his home community, Flint, Michigan, where he helped develop the community education concept. Community education ties together all learning and seeks to involve everyone in the determination of their own lives and the life of the community.

In 1935, the Mott Foundation began pioneering the community school/education concept in Flint, Michigan. Since then, the Foundation's community school/education efforts have expanded across the nation and throughout the world. Furthermore, our community education efforts have often expanded beyond school-based to include community-based models.

The Foundation has had two five-year plans for community education: the 1973-78 plan and the 1978-83 plan. The primary elements of the 1973-78 plan were 1) dissemination, 2) implementation (opening community school programs), and 3) training. Five program strategies were developed for implementing the 1978-83 Five-Year Plan: 1) implementation of partnerships, 2) leadership development, 3) research and evaluation, 4) media development, and 5) national network support.

The Foundation is in a one-year extension of the 1978-83 Five-Year Plan. This will allow for additional time to determine the direction of funding by the Foundation. To date, no long-range plan for community education has been foreseen by the Foundation. It is anticipated that future funding for community education will be done on a one-to-three-year basis.

Currently, the Mott Foundation is in a period of diminishing resources, due to the economy and our present investment portfolio. The overall assets of the Foundation have dropped from $425 million in 1980 to $386 million in 1981. The projected recovery time for the portfolio is 1986. This reduction in assets has limited our national giving program to some extent.

The Foundation has also felt a more serious need to help its home town of Flint, Michigan, which is experiencing a very depressed economy. One of the major projects for Flint is Auto World, an automobile theme park, which is to be built in downtown Flint. Ground has been broken for Auto World, and the scheduled completion date is July, 1984.

With the overall financial status of the Foundation, there is a decline of resources for community education. This can be seen from 1981 to the projections for 1984. In 1981, there was $4.4 million for community education; 1982 there was $3.9 million; 1983 will have $3.4 million; and in 1984, it is projected that there will be $2.7 million for community education.

ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Stuart Rosenfield
Research and Programs, Southern Growth

Introduction

I used to be with the Department of Education at the National Institute of Education, a research agency within the Department of Education. I was there for six years, working mostly on issues of rural education, vocational education, and school finance. My interest in rural education goes back to when I lived in northern Vermont, in a community of about 500 citizens, where I ran a small alternative, parent-cooperative school.

About a month ago, I left the government and moved to North Carolina. I'm now the director of Research and Programs for the Southern Growth Policies Board, serving the 12 southern governors. We provide policy alternatives regarding regional planning and interstate cooperation. Terry Sanford started the board 12 years ago. Every six years, the board creates a Commission on the Future of the South to establish goals for the next six years. As a result of the 1980 Commission, we're going to be hearing a lot over the next few years about education and human resource development and the links to economic development. I have a few recent board newsletters you can pick up that should give you a bit of background about the organization.

I'm here because I've been asked to speak about the federal government's role in rural education, as it is perceived by the Reagan Administration. (Pause.) Well, that concludes my remarks. Actually, I guess there is something I can say. I was a bureaucrat until a few weeks ago, when I happily traded in what is a bureaucrat's most valuable possession--my Rolodex--for a pickup truck, and I moved to the South.

An Historical Perspective

To understand some of the current issues concerning the federal role, I think you have to have some sort of historical perspective. Education has traditionally been a state, not a federal, responsibility. Districts will question even that, saying it's a local prerogative. But provisions for education are included in most state constitutions. Many states have a "thorough and efficient" clause, which means that the state is required to provide some sort of thorough and efficient education. This clause is the basis for the state's assumption of responsibility.

Education is not mentioned in the federal Constitution, however. Therefore, the rationale given for any federal intervention is that the federal government is not directly addressing educational issues, but is instead basing its actions on some overriding national interests--something transcending state and local interests. More often than not, this overriding national interest is economically or socially related, and is not a pedagogical issue.

If you go back over history, you'll find that the first federal intervention, excluding the Morrill Act, was the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. The issues in rural areas then were out-migration, depopulation, scientific farming, and mechanization. In contrast, the issues in the cities were immigration, urbanization, and foreign competition; the urban problems were caused by growth and expansion. But the issues were economically related in both areas, and so Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 to help the states cope. But that didn't come easy, and there was a lot of resistance. During the hearings, the congressmen and the senators protested that "this is not a federal responsibility. It's a state issue."

In 1957, the launching of Sputnik stimulated new federal aid to educational systems. The National Education Defense Act was passed--the first

legislation that funded the area vocational centers. The driving force behind these federal actions was fear; the issue was national security.

Later, during the '60s, new policies were created by the Civil Rights Movement. The basis for them was the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and the issue was equity. In every case, the presumption was that the states either could not or would not address these important national interests. In most cases, federal aid was not offered freely but was fought for by certain special interest groups. Most of the federal programs were supplemental and were compensatory in nature. More and more groups, previously disenfranchised or underserved, began to take advantage of more and more special programs.

The New Federalism

Today we have what is called the "new federalism." The assumption inherent in this idea is that the states and local districts have now internalized all of the equity concerns and no longer need the federal aid; the states are willing to offer these programs on their own. In a lot of ways, the new federalism is a backlash against the federal aid that has been given to the more needy segments of the population.

Now, I'd like to look at the policies that define the new federalism in education and then to speculate about their effects--both positive and negative--on Southern rural schools. The main ingredients of the new federalism as it is practiced--not necessarily as it is preached--are consolidation of programs, deregulation, and, enhancing state and local capacity. If you look at what's being done in this last area, however, you'll see that it's not much. The only activity that can be cited is the Commission on Excellence in Education, and this program has a very strong urban bias. Except for holding one regional meeting on rural issues, the Commission has done very little for rural areas. This regional meeting will be the basis of this report.

That session was held in Denver and was headed by the Chief State School Officer in Nebraska. In talking to people on the Commission, I find that they are not interested at all in rural issues. Their priorities are what's going on in the cities. The other federal issue of interest to them is technology, and even that is controversial in the department.

The technology initiatives are under attack internally. They're being proposed and backed by what I would call the Republican right, or the more traditional right. The Moral Majority within the department oppose any kind of technology initiatives because they see technology as a way of centralizing the curriculum and eliminating local control.

What I see emerging as the true part of federalism, based on actions rather than words, is parental choice and privatization of schools. A lot of the current policies are geared to make sure that private schools get a share of the federal money and in some way to encourage competition within the school system. But these policies define parental choice as choice of parents, not choice of students. They make that distinction very clear because they don't want students involved in making decisions.

Some of these ingredients sound reasonable. Deregulation and simplification are things that many of us have requested for a long time now. But there's also a hidden agenda in the way these things are being implemented. The largest federal program is Chapter 1. While it has not been consolidated, it has been altered. The funds now cannot go directly to schools and LEAs, and the LEAs don't have to distribute the funds equitably. They've cut that equity language out of the act, which may be a problem for rural schools if the cities control the distribution within a given district.

These proponents have also eliminated the requirement for parental advisory boards. In fact, across the board, they've eliminated advisory

boards and citizen input. In the proposed Vocational Act, they've even prohibited the use of federal funds for state advisory councils.

The Effects of Chapter II

Chapter II of the Act is more interesting because it's a more pertinent example of the new federalism. It merges 29 programs that were formerly categorical in nature; these programs included metrics, consumer education, population education, environmental education, community schools, and emergency school aid. Now what we have is a single pot of money being distributed to the states on the basis of the population aged 5 to 17, with no need factors. The states are required to distribute at least 80 percent of their allocation to the districts, taking into account the proportion of low-income people and sparsely populated areas.

In this case, with the change in money allocation, there's a good chance that the rural districts will get more money than they did before. Some rural districts were not able to apply for the money when it was categorical; they encountered a lot of problems in trying to figure out where all the programs were and in trying to make sure that the applications were on the right form. This will simplify matters for rural LEAs because now it's really an entitlement.

You should bear in mind that consolidation is often a euphemism for reduction: the total pot of money is being reduced, with plans to reduce it more and more, until finally it's eliminated. Another thing to remember is that private school students must get a share in the distribution. All students in the district have to receive an equal share, not necessarily in dollars, but in the resources provided by this money.

Partly because there is no need-based formula, the southern states stand to get a little bit less. The southern states have historically been more dependent on federal funds. Other states receive about eight percent of

their budgets from the federal government, while the southern states receive about double that. Georgia receives about 15 percent; Alabama, 16 percent; Arkansas, more than 16 percent; Mississippi, almost 25 percent; and South Carolina, almost 19 percent.

Most southern states have lost funds in the new act because the total sum is reduced, but within the states the rural districts have tended to gain. There's been no real analysis done, but the Council of Great City Schools did look at how the large cities fared. For example, in Louisiana, New Orleans lost 65 percent of its funding for these 29 programs; the rest of the state lost only 18 percent. In Georgia, Atlanta lost 40 percent; the balance of the state lost 9 percent. In Florida, Dade County lost 19 percent; the balance of the state gained 9 percent. So they're really hurting the large cities more than the rural districts with Chapter II.

An analysis, funded by NIE, is being conducted right now with the implementation of Chapter II in nine states, including South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. The analysis is to be completed around February. The researchers met in Washington, D.C., last week to present interim findings.

Question: Who's doing the analysis?

Response: The South Carolina study is being done by a fellow at the University of South Carolina. His last name is Cohen; he's a school finance expert. In Tennessee, it's Janet Eyler at the Policy Center at Vanderbilt. And Martin Katzman is doing the Texas case study. They're all going to be looking at the differences between the suburban, urban, and rural districts as well as who governs the implementation, who gets involved in decisions now, and how the money's being spent.

Unfortunately, everybody's looking at these block grants to determine whether they are accomplishing the general goals of consolidation,

deregulation, decentralization, and dependability. People aren't looking at whether the things that these various categorical programs were intended to do are still being done. My theory is that once you start ignoring the original intent of the programs you eliminate the need for federal money because you really can't make any strong case for federal revenue sharing in public education.

Some of the early analyses of Chapter II showed that they're having these problems. The National Conference of State Legislatures found that the law ignores differences of state organizations and governors. All the money goes to the governor. That's a problem when the office of the state superintendent of schools is a separate organization and the superintendent is elected, which is the case in California and some southern states. Early analyses also found that only a very small part of this money is being used for special-need students--only five to ten percent in Maryland, Oklahoma, Utah, and Delaware. As of summer 1983, nine states had not even applied for their funds and 21 states didn't have their distribution, formulas, or plan approved yet. So the implementation of Chapter II hasn't been quite as simple as it sounds.

The Vocational Education Act

Another example of consolidation accompanied by reduction, one I'm more familiar with, is the Vocational Education Act. It's a different kind of consolidation. The proposed bill consolidates all the various provisions that were in the original act and combines them with adult basic education. It also has a new purpose. The first sentence of the new act states that the purpose of vocational education is to stimulate economic development. The emphasis is much more heavily geared towards customized training and post-secondary vocational education. It suggests the use not of teachers but of people from

business, forming an exchange program between business and industry and teachers within the school system.

The new act also eliminates all of the requirements for federal approval, for planning for all evaluations, for planning evaluation and data collection, and for participation in decision making. The law specifically states that the funds cannot be used for state advisory councils. In deeding the $50,000 set aside for sex equity coordinator, the law eliminated every provision for equity (the major change in 1976 was sex equity). Now it even states that using funds for day care is prohibited.

Program Application

Another problem often not considered, besides the reduction in the Vocational Education Act, is that there are other federal programs that provide money to public schools and vocational education. The Appalachian Regional Commission and the EDA have put about $2 billion into building public schools. Those programs have also been cut. Moreover, a lot of CETA money went into public education. The cumulative effects of these budget cuts is underestimated by looking only at educational programs.

Deregulation is a little harder to evaluate. Proponents of the new federalism have simplified the federal requirements and left much more to the discretion of state and local governments. We don't really know yet how that's going to affect the goals of education programs. I'm not sure we're ever going to know, because they've eliminated almost all the requirements for data collection for evaluation and have eliminated most of the research fundings coming out of the federal government.

In the last six months I spent with NIE, they didn't allow us to publish one report or one finding. For example, a congressionally mandated study was conducted on school finance; so far, NIE has rejected publication requests for all nine of their studies. Six months before the study was due to

be completed, they fired the entire advisory committee and put in a new council. The new council met one time and came up with their recommendation--tax credits for education. This reduction of federal information could work out well in the end for the states because the federal requirements for data weren't always what was needed. The Vocational Education Act, for example, requires the states to collect data based on the provisions of the law, not on what is needed for policy. A reduced federal role could be beneficial in some ways if the states will continue to collect data and to conduct evaluations. The states can start to collect the kind of data that is important for policy making, for decision making--this wasn't always possible in the past.

The Problem of Parental Choice

This leads me into another federal policy area--parental choice, which gives parents a choice of what school their children will attend. The major current proposal would give every parent a tax credit of $[illegible] against their federal income tax for enrolling children in private schools. On the surface, this seems relatively fair for both urban and rural parents, but the problem in rural districts is that you often don't have a choice. Most people in cities or highly populated areas may choose from several private schools they can send their children to, but there are few private schools in rural areas. Without that choice, of course, the tax credit doesn't do much good. Yet everybody shares in that cost when it's a tax credit because it comes out of the federal budget--and everybody pays for that. The revenue loss has to be made up somewhere else, and everyone participates. If you live in a rural district that doesn't have the choice, you're essentially financing the choice for parents only in urban districts.

Choice in a Rural District

Nobody has dealt with the whole concept of what choice means in a rural district. While the concept of vouchers is, in many ways, less regressive and more fair than tax credits, it is still a problem for rural districts because it often means crossing district boundaries. Nobody's concerned with what happens if your child goes into a district where expenditures and tax rates are different. As presented by officials in the federal government, "choice" has to do with choice within districts--magnet schools or alternative schools. This choice is always phrased in an urban setting.

About 10 years ago, we tried to fund a number of studies to look at the issues of choice. There are different kinds of voucher programs, ranging from highly regulated to Milton Friedman's free market approach. New Hampshire wanted to try Friedman's approach but never even got beyond the development phase, mostly because of opposition from the teacher's unions. The only voucher experiment actually implemented was highly modified--within the public school's choice--at Alum Rock, a district in San Jose. It's interesting that the voucher concept originally came out of the liberal left, out of the Cambridge Institute, as a very regulated form of choice to avoid attempts to escape desegregation. Now it's being posed as the alternative of the conservative right.

The Facts of Federal Support

The National Institute of Education is experiencing a major move toward eliminating any kind of federal role, even in research where the budget has been virtually nothing for the last two years. The NIE is supposed to have at least an unsolicited proposal process whereby anybody can submit a proposal. Proposals are to be evaluated objectively by external reviewers, then rated, and finally submitted to the director to be funded.

Nothing, however, has been funded for rural education. There was a proposal in the last review period that was ranked second of 60 proposals in our division. Everybody thought it was great and recommended its funding. The proposal analyzed the relationship between education economic development in four states: South Carolina, Maine, Iowa, and Montana. Even though the new administration's reviewers ranked it very high, the proposal was not funded. In fact, the choices were made without staff input. Not one rural project was funded.

Moreover, no rural projects are underway at NIE right now and neither are there proposals for any. There are a couple of fairly small projects, but these are purchase orders, which means less than $5,000. One of these projects is an update of a report Jonathan Sher and I did six years ago on the status of public education in rural areas. Gail Parks is updating that with new data. A few small case studies, in North Carolina, Massachusetts, Texas, Alaska, California, and Wisconsin, are looking at the use of technology in rural schools. NIE had a rural team up until two or three years ago. One person remains from that team, Tom Shultz, who's still very interested in rural education. Contact him with any interesting research ideas on rural education you may have.

People were more optimistic about rural education a few years ago, when the department was created. At that time, there was a provision for an Office of Rural Education within the Department of Education Act--mostly due to the lobbying of PURE (People United for Rural Education) in Iowa and Senator Melcher in Montana.

In all these years, however, that office has never been fully staffed. There has never been even one full-time person assigned, never a person in that position with an interest in rural education. The most concern ever

expressed for the Office of Rural Education happened when Norm Hearn, who is interested in rural education, tried to get it moved to the office of elementary and secondary. It had been placed under the office of occupational and adult education. Of course, as soon as he tried to have it moved, the vocational and adult people decided they really wanted it--nobody likes to give up territory.

To demonstrate his interest, Assistant Secretary Worthington did establish an intra-agency task force in rural education, which meets once a month for discussing issues. I have attended some of those meetings and have seen the reports they've made. I don't know if it was intentional or unintentional, but not one of the representatives is a person who has previously been involved or interested in rural education. The person who represents the office of research, a political scientist, is inexperienced in rural matters. Not only that, but he is from Chicago--I suppose "rural" Chicago.

At some of the early meetings I attended, there was a lot of "process" but, as far as I know, they haven't actually accomplished anything. It's pretty discouraging. On the other hand, the task force does have a person in charge who is committed to rural education and who has tried to accomplish something. This person is Duane Neilson, with a background in vocational agriculture. He is the one person there who is committed to rural interests, and I think he will try to do what he can.

To summarize, the problem I see is that new federalism is accompanied by a major reduction of federal dollars and diminished federal power in how the funds are distributed. This power shift is going to be pitting urban against rural and county against county because school districts will be competing for a smaller and smaller number of dollars. What districts will end up getting out of it will depend on where their political strength lies. It will

mean that rural people will have to lobby at the state level rather than at the federal level--and I doubt that rural districts and schools have much power in the southern states. As federal funds are reduced, it is unlikely that the rural schools in these states are going to end up in very good shape.

Questions and Answers about Politics in Rural Education

I would like to open up a new topic for discussion.

Question: In your experience, what are the advocate groups in Washington who are out there lobbying for some general attention to rural education or for some specific issue clearly related to the interest of rural education?

Answer: In recent years, the American Vocational Association began to consider effects on rural districts. They hadn't really done so in the past, but in all their current lobbying, they have a major section on the needs of rural areas. The National Rural Center was an advocate of rural education until they lost their funding at the end of August and went out of business. Rural America still lobbies, but they haven't been very concerned with education.

There aren't very many people or groups in Washington looking out for rural interests in education. The interest groups are urban-oriented. For example, the Council of Greater City Schools is very effective, as are the National Urban Coalition and the Urban League, but they are all concerned with urban issues.

Question: What about professional groups like the National School Board Association?

Answer: The National School Board Association does very little. They have one person, Jim Meckinberg, who's interested in rural education issues; otherwise, they have few rural members. Most of the members who join their Associates Program represent urban districts.

Question: Is the same true of the NASSP and groups like that?

Answer: Yes, as well as the National Association of State Boards of Education and the National Governors Association, who are both much more interested in urban issues. Even NIE has traditionally been much more interested in urban education. Only in the last two or three years have they really recognized rural education as a special discipline and topic.

Part of my experience from living five years in Washington was learning that when you talk to folks about rural education, they're all interested and they're all positive and they're all friendly. Tom Shannon, the head of the National School Board Association, made a very good speech about the need to get involved in rural education. The problem is follow-up. It's not that you get active opposition from anybody. The problem is that you don't get active action from anybody. Tom makes his speech--a good speech, couldn't fault a word of it. But, in effect, what happens with the National School Board Association is that it doesn't do much to follow up or to make any of those recommendations real. You're operating in a Washington Reno and they either buy off opposition by going through those kinds of motions which really represent sort of a shell game and you don't get anywhere unless you have some person who is constantly on the scene.

Question: Are there any governmental representatives who are concerned about rural issues?

Answer: Yes, there are a few people in Congress who show some interest. One of these is Representative Wes Watkins from Oklahoma, the head of the Congressional Rural Caucus. Interest by government officials has been related more to economical development than to education, but if you actually approach them, they'll be supportive. They'll make sure that rural education is considered.

Frank Butras is the staff person on the Rural Caucus. There's Senator Stafford of Vermont, the head of the Senate Labor Education Committee, who is interested. Congressman Jeffords from Vermont. But there aren't many. Some have some interest in rural education, if you really push them on it. They each have a staff person on Education. Beth Buelman, who works for Jeffords, has always been interested in rural education.

Question: Are there no Southerners?

Answer: No. Carl Perkins, a Southerner, is interested in education, but he's never shown any stronger interest in rural than urban. There aren't any really strong interest groups in rural education.

Question: Are you familiar with Pennsylvania's school funding and the density formulas that they use? I wonder if that has been challenged, or if that could apply in reverse to rural areas for their state aid?

Answer: State aid. No, there are about 35 states now that have some sort of a sparcity factor in their state formulas. These states are rarely the eastern states, which have rural, but fewer sparsely populated areas. The states that have the sparcity factor are mostly western states. But almost all the states do have some factor that compensates for either population density or size of schools. I don't know what the case is in Pennsylvania.

Question: Pennsylvania's plan favors the big cities.

Answer: There are two arguments concerning that. One is the municipal overburden argument that the big cities need more in order to compensate for the higher costs. The other is that the rural areas need more because of the diseconomies of scale. It's unfortunate that the rural areas and the large, urban areas always have to compete with one another over this.

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